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Our presidents and their mothers

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# Our Presidents and Their Mothers

BY

WILLIAM JUDSON HAMPTON, D. D.

*Author of "The Shrine Invisible," "Dodging the  
Commandments," etc., etc.*

Former Grand Chaplain of the Grand Chapter  
Royal Arch Masons of New Jersey

INTRODUCTION BY

THE HONORABLE WALTER E. EDGE

United States Senator from New Jersey, and  
Former Governor of the State



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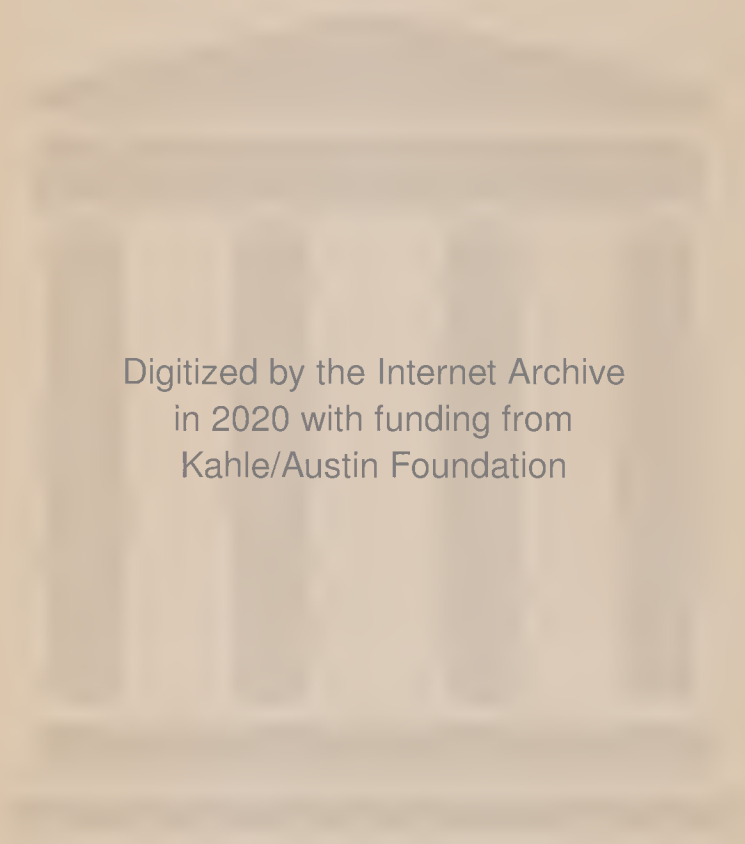
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TO MY DEAR MOTHER  
Susanna Baldwin Hampton



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## INTRODUCTION

BY UNITED STATES SENATOR WALTER E. EDGE  
*Former Governor of New Jersey*

THIS interesting volume will find its way straight to the hearts of those fortunate enough to have experienced the deathless devotion and unerring guidance of a mother's love. It will rekindle tender sentiments that perhaps have merely smouldered under the heavy weight of life's dull cares and every-day matter-of-fact affairs. It should serve as an inspiration toward a reconciliation with the wholesome rules of living first uttered at the cradle and later understood in the playroom. Finally, it must throw a penetrating light on the reasons for the greatness of the great, uncovering those wholesome influences that make possible the carving of truly eminent characters through shaping early impressions.

Not from motives of gratitude alone, but as a matter of historical accuracy, most of our American statesmen freely admit that many of their personal characteristics which the world terms worth while constituted the love-given legacy of an idolizing mother. What compassion she taught! What patience and fortitude and other foundation stones of

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

a creditable career! How she early marshalled the forces of common sense and righteousness against all manner of moral weaknesses! How she endured and forgave! How she loved!

It seems to me that a work treating thus intimately with the mother influence upon great Americans is particularly appropriate at this time — now, when hundreds and thousands of mothers throughout the land have made such heroic sacrifices and have exhibited such marked patriotism! “The hand that rocks the cradle” has ruled our nation before, and rules it today. Then, as now, it was not autocratic rule. Then, as now, it was the inspiration of true democracy and the course chiefly responsible for everything that we are, and everything that we hope to be. MOTHERS — thank God for them! May their sweetness and tenderness forever sway temporal power!

WALTER E. EDGE.

## INTRODUCTORY WORD

**A** MOTHER who had raised seven noble sons, and not a black sheep among the number, was asked how she did it. She replied, "I raised them on prayer and hickory." Some might think that rather an incongruous mixture, but possibly most folks on reflection would conclude it was Scriptural. Solid piety and wholesome authority cannot be divorced. This does not mean that parental authority shall always manifest itself in the use of the rod. Charles M. Stuart once ~~was~~ he was raised on a farm, and his father frequently "raised" him with a hame strap! On the other hand, President Ulysses S. Grant declares that he has no recollection of ever being punished at home, either by scolding or whipping, by either father or mother. Yet that home, presided over by Hannah Simpson Grant, was not devoid of parental authority, only these parents had discovered an excellent substitute for "hickory." It is worthy of note that practically all the mothers of our Presidents were Godly women. Whether, in training their sons, the rod was used much or little, there was no substitute for prayer.

No boy has ever made a mistake in being good to his mother. God's blessing is assured to such, and

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even the cold, selfish world that has not much to waste on sentimentalism will say of such a boy, "Blessed." When the Democrats of Minnesota nominated John A. Johnson for Governor a few years ago, there seemed little likelihood of his being elected, for the State was proverbially Republican. But his opponent made the mistake of taunting him in public of being a drunkard's son. Then Johnson's friends had to tell the story of his life. At 13, he made his mother stop taking in washing, that he might support her. He had a struggle on his young shoulders, but he succeeded. When the people heard these things, Republicans and Democrats alike exclaimed, "He is the man we want for Governor!" He was easily elected, and died when but 48, saying to his devoted wife, "I have tried to fight a good fight." Had Governor Johnson lived, he might have graced the Presidential chair, for he was strong in every way, and he bade fair to become a nation's idol.

The history of our country could not be written without bringing in the names of many brave, heroic, patriotic women. Written on the passenger list of the *Mayflower*, alongside the names of the Pilgrim Fathers, were the names of a number of women. Was that perilous trip easier for those women than for the men? The very names of those nineteen wives and seven daughters on the passenger list of the *Mayflower* stand out in sublime grandeur. Not a man died for affixing his name to the



## *Introductory Word*

Declaration of Independence, although every man took his life in his own hands when he did that, and every man realized the significance of his act should the patriot cause end in failure. But many a woman did die because she heroically put her name to the passenger list of the *Mayflower*. Both meant battles with the direst kind of hardship. A beautiful tradition has come down to us from the day of the *Mayflower*: "The first foot that pressed the snow-clad surface of Plymouth Rock, December 21, 1620, was that of the fair maiden, Mary Chilton; and the last survivor of the *Mayflower* Pilgrim Company was Mary Allerton, who lived to see the planting of twelve of the thirteen colonies which formed the nucleus of the United States."

Macauley has said that it is a proverbial tendency of biographers to contract what has been called "the disease of admiration"; whether it be a disease contracted or not, we acknowledge a profound regard for the noble characters herein described. Those who have studied the lives of our Presidents have claimed that these men owed more to their mothers than to their fathers. Not more than half were reared under comfortable circumstances; the parents of all the others had more or less of a struggle. It seems great men have had great mothers. Sir Henry Taylor once wrote, "The world knows nothing of its greatest men." He would have said a truer and a wiser thing had he said, "The world knows nothing of its greatest

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

women." The biographer or historian has scarcely hinted at the greatness of the mothers of our Presidents, and the part they played, and the strength of their influence in preparing sons for the Presidential chair. Mrs. Pryor, in "The Mother of Washington," says, "The mothers of famous men survive only in their sons. This is a rule almost as invariable as a law of nature. Whatever the aspirations and energies of the mothers, memorable achievement is not for them. No memoir has been written in this country of the women who bore, fostered, trained our great men. What do we know of the mothers of Daniel Webster, John Adams, Patrick Henry, Andrew Jackson, or the mothers of our Revolutionary heroes?" And may we not add, what does the world know of the mothers of Grant, Cleveland, Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson? Should not the world know something of them?

Seven of the mothers of our Presidents were left widows. These mothers, to whom was entrusted the supreme task of rearing sons to become Presidents of the United States, were Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Hayes, Mrs. Garfield, and Mrs. Cleveland.

To give credit in this work where credit is due would be cheerfully done if it were within our power to do so. There have been those who have assisted through correspondence. We are grateful to them for such kind service. To give due credit to the books consulted would be impossible. Between

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eight hundred and nine hundred books, pamphlets and periodicals have been searched. We have visited many libraries in quest of information, but chief among them has been the great Astor Library in New York City. This research work has been a hard task, but never irksome, owing to the well-nigh sublime character of the subject. Our purpose has been chiefly to rescue from oblivion the names as well as the lives of the mothers of our Presidents. Whether or not we have succeeded, we leave to the judgment of our readers.

WILLIAM JUDSON HAMPTON.

Port Richmond, New York City.



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OUR PRESIDENTS AND  
THEIR MOTHERS





# OUR PRESIDENTS AND THEIR MOTHERS

MARY BALL — WASHINGTON

GEORGE WASHINGTON

*First President of the United States, 1789-1797*

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born of English stock, in Bridge's Creek, Westmoreland County, Virginia, February 22, 1732. His father, Augustine, was twice married, — his second wife, Mary Ball, became the mother of the first President of the United States.

A pen picture of Mary Ball has been discovered in a letter which a Union soldier found in a bundle of old letters in an abandoned house in Yorktown, at the close of the Civil War. She was at that time sixteen years of age. The letter is dated at Williamsburg, 1722, and is published by Mrs. Pryor in her book, "The Mother of Washington."

"Dear Sukey — Madam Ball, of Lancaster, and her sweet Molly have gone Home. Mama thinks Molly the loveliest Maiden she has known. She is about sixteen years old, is taller than Me, is very

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Sensible, Modest and Loving. Her Hair is like unto Flax, her eyes are the color of Yours, and her Cheeks are like May blossoms. I wish you could see her."

Here we have flaxen hair, May blossoms, and a delightful suggestion of Virginia peach blossoms and hedge roses! Sensible, modest and loving. What a delightful picture of a joyous girl, just blossoming into young womanhood! We are informed by her own descendants and the wisest historians, that no true picture of Mary Ball exists. In the house of her early married life one that was genuine was burned. Yet certain pen pictures which describe her, and which have been preserved by the historian, remain. Fiske writes, "If tradition is to be trusted, few sons ever had a more lovely and devoted mother, and no mother a more dutiful and affectionate son." A playmate of George's early days says, "Whoever has seen that inspiring air and manner so characteristic in the Father of his Country will remember the matron as she appeared, the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being commanded."

It would be interesting to know much more of the early history of Mary Ball. "To know what kind of a plant produced the kindly oak that shaded a nation, and is still shaking down its freedom on the world, for the spirit of George Washington is still vitally felt wherever the parliaments of man convene."

## *Mary Ball — Washington*

Washington's education was limited. America's first President was not college bred. Many parents in those early days, desirous of giving their children an education, sent them to England, but George's father had prepared him to become a practical business man, and his studies had in every way qualified him for that career.

Augustine Washington died in 1743, when forty-nine years of age. He left behind two sons by his first wife, and four sons and a daughter by his second wife, Mary Ball. George was ten years old at the time of his father's death. Most biographers have laid tremendous emphasis on the ancestry of Washington on the father's side, and the part that played in the making of this man; they have also spoken respectfully of his mother, but the part she played in his early education was by far the major part. She had even more to do with making him wise and good and great than the help he derived through the channel of books and schools. To this mother, Fiske declares, we owe the precepts and examples that governed his life. She taught him the excellent moral and religious maxims found in the "Contemplations" of Sir Matthew Hale. This volume, with his mother's inscription on the fly-leaf, was among the treasures of his library. He himself ascribed to his mother's care the origin of his fortune and fame.

Mary Ball Washington was not yet thirty-six years old at the time of her husband's death. She

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was now the owner of a great estate, and could easily have selected for herself a gay life socially. But as Goethe says, "She is the most excellent woman who, when her husband dies, becomes as a father to her children," and this was the part she elected to play. She survived her husband, his widow, forty-six years. Mr. Custis, who often visited her in his childhood, pays her this beautiful tribute: "Bred in those domestic and independent habits which graced the Virginia matrons in the old days of Virginia, this lady, by the death of her husband, became involved in the cares of a young family at a period when those cares seem more especially to claim the aid and control of the stronger sex. It was left for this eminent woman, by a method the most rare, by an education and discipline the most peculiar and imposing, to form in the youth-time of her son those great and essential qualities which gave lustre to the glories of his after life. If the school savored the more of the Spartan than the Persian character, it was a fitter school to form a hero. Destined to be the ornament of the age in which he flourished, and a standard of excellence for ages to come."

"The home of Mrs. Washington, of which she was mistress, was a pattern of order. There the levity and indulgences common to youth were tempered by a deference and well-regulated restraint, which, while it neither suppressed nor condemned any rational enjoyment used in the springtime of

## *Mary Ball — Washington*

life, prescribed those enjoyments within the bounds of moderation and propriety. Thus the chief was taught the duty of obedience which prepared him to command. Still the mother held in reserve an authority which never departed from her, even when her son had become the most illustrious of men. It seemed to say, 'I am your mother, the being who gave you life, the guide who directed your steps when they needed a guardian; my maternal affection drew forth your love; my authority constrained your spirit; whatever may be your success or your renown, next to your God, your reverence is due me!' Nor did the chief dissent from the truths, but to the last moments of his venerable parent, yielded to her will the most dutiful and implicit obedience, and felt for her person and character the highest respect and the most enthusiastic attachment.

"Such were the domestic influences under which the mind of Washington was formed; and that he not only profited by but fully appreciated their excellence and the character of his mother, his behavior toward her at all times testified." ("The Life of Washington," Mrs. Pryor.)

The thoughtfulness of Washington toward his mother has become proverbial. Had he shown disregard for his mother's wishes, had he trampled upon her affections, his own career might have been radically different, as well as the entire history of our country. His eldest brother, Lawrence, was an



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English officer, and had distinguished himself in several battles. Observing his brother's natural desire to become a sailor, he procured an appointment for him as midshipman. George was then only fourteen years of age; he was filled with unbounded delight, and it seems as though his mother at first acquiesced in his desire to become a seafaring man. A fine career of glory and honor seemed now to be opening before him. The appointment was considered difficult for an American to obtain, and it was a matter of congratulation to the family that George had been thus honored. But when the time came for him to leave, it was more than his mother could bear. When she thought of her fair-haired boy, only fourteen, taken away from her, exposed to the rough career of a sailor, — and the rough usage of sailors, and to be exposed to the corrupting influences of a seafaring life, and possibly wrecked on some far distant coast, or his body torn with the fire of an enemy, — it was more than she could endure. When he came to bid her good-bye, and found her in tears, although his trunk had already been placed on board the vessel, seeing her distress and grief at his going so great, he at once gave up the project, and, throwing his arms around her neck, assured her that he would not leave her. His mother was sorry for his disappointment, but undoubtedly that change altered his entire career in after life. Man has conjectured what might have happened had he disregarded his mother's wishes

## *Mary Ball — Washington*

and gone forth as a British sailor. He might have become a British naval officer, and, if stationed along our coast, have become angered at the uprisings of the colonists, and have expended that fine vigor and leadership in behalf of the English king. Had we had no Washington, Lee might have been Commander-in-chief, and his leadership would have spelled defeat. Should success have come under some other leadership, who would have steadied the ship of state until a stable government had been established,—who but Washington? What destinies hung on the decision of a boy! A boy's regard for his mother's wishes seems like a mighty small hinge on which the destiny of a nation shall swing, but in this instance we can do nothing less than reckon with it. Had he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his mother, the Capital yonder might have had another name, as well as one of our States, several counties and rivers, and innumerable small towns and almost countless children.

Washington's distinguished military career is familiar to every high school scholar. That fine career was begun when he was only twenty. At that early age he was made major of a military corps in Virginia. He fought as an officer in battles with the Indians and French through many years. He seemed to have a charmed life. Even a savage refused to fire at him, and recognized the protection the Great Spirit seemed to afford him. But back of that, in shadowy outline, we see a mother, in

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prayer, on her knees. In 1758 Washington served as Commander-in-chief of the forces in Virginia, and in 1775 he was unanimously chosen as the Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, and as such served throughout the War of the Revolution. After President Washington had retired from office, he was again appointed Commander-in-chief of the Army, with the rank of General, by President Adams.

Washington's mother was a Christian. The Bible was her constant companion. It was her custom to have family prayers every morning and evening, with servants of the family present. Mr. Custis says, "She was always pious, but in her latter days her devotions were performed in private. She was in the habit of repairing every day to a secluded spot formed by rocks and trees near her dwelling, where, abstracted from the world and worldly things, she communed in humiliation and prayer with her Creator."

When her son was about to engage in perilous fighting on the frontier, she laid her hand on his shoulder and devoutly said, "God is our sure trust; to Him I commend you." Washington never forgot those words. When he accepted a position on General Braddock's staff, he said to his mother "The God to whom you commended me when I set out on a most perilous errand defended me from all harm, and will do so again." When the news of Braddock's defeat reached Fredericksburg, his mother



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was forced to wait twelve days before she could be assured of his safety. When finally she received his letter, he told of his wonderful escape, with four bullets shot through his coat and two horses shot under him. How can one separate this miraculous escape from the sublime devotion and prayers of his godly mother?

When Washington's father was dying, he kissed his children in turn, and said, "Be good to your mother." Washington, in after years, said he had faithfully kept that promise he made to his dying father, when he knelt weeping at his bedside; that his mother also believed that that promise had been kept is evidenced in her favorite remark, "George has always been a good son." As his mother grew older, he repeatedly urged her to make her home with him, but her answer was, "I thank you for your dutiful and kindly offer; my wants, however, are few, and I feel perfectly competent to care for myself."

Washington's last act on his way North to be inaugurated President of the United States was to turn aside to visit his aged mother, who was living at Fredericksburg. "After embracing her, he told her of his election to the office of President, and added, that before he entered upon his duties, he had come to bid her an affectionate farewell. 'So soon,' said he, 'as public business, which must necessarily be encountered in forming a new government, can be dispensed with, I shall hasten back.'

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‘ You will see me no more,’ she replied, ‘ my great age and the disease which is rapidly approaching my vitals warns me that I shall not be long in this world. But you, George, fulfill the highest destinies which heaven has assigned you. Go, my son, and may heaven’s blessing be with you always.’ Overcome by the solemnity of her manner and the declaration which he knew to be true, he leaned his head on her aged shoulder and wept. That great giant heart which made him so terrible on the battlefield was yet full of tenderest affections, and clinging still to that dear parent whose love for him was as un-failing as the ocean tide; he wept like a child when told that he should see her face no more. Not when on the disastrous field he stops and gathers around him by his majestic bearing the broken fragments of his army, nor when he stands at the head of the Republic which he had saved, does he appear so great, so worthy the affections of men, as here, when he leans and weeps on the shoulder of his mother.” This proved to be the last time that Washington saw his mother.

At Fredericksburg stands a monument erected to the memory of Mary Ball Washington. It is the only monument erected to the memory of a woman by the women of America. The monument was dedicated by President Cleveland, May 10, 1894. The oration at the unveiling was delivered by Senator Daniels. No more appropriate words could be found with which to close this section than these,

## *Mary Ball — Washington*

quoted from this address: "She nursed a hero at her breast. At her knee she trained to the love and fear of God and to the kingly virtues, honor, truth and valor, the lion of the tribe, that gave to America liberty and independence. This, her title to renown. It is enough. Eternal dignity and heavenly grace dwell upon the brow of this blessed mother; nor burnished gold nor sculptured stone nor rhythmic praise, could add one jot or tittle to her chaste glory. Tributes to the lofty genius which is the rare gift of nature, and to the brilliant deeds which are the rare fruits of fitting opportunity, fulfill a noble function; but they often excite extravagant emulations that can never be satisfied, and individualize models which few by possibility may copy. This tribute is not to them. It is to one who possessed only the homely virtues of her sex; but what is there in human life that can be more admirable, or bring it in closer proximity to the divine? She was simply a private citizen. No sovereign crown rested upon her brow. She did not lead an army, like a Joan of Arc, nor slay a tyrant, like Charlotte Corday. She was not versed in letters or arts. She was not an angel of mercy, like Florence Nightingale, nor the consort of Nero. She did not shine amidst the throngs which bow to the charms of evil beauty and hospitality. But in any assembly of the beautiful, the brilliant, the powerful, or the brave of her sex, no form could awaken a holier sentiment of reverence than she,

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and that sentiment is all the deeper because she was the unassuming wife and mother whose kingdom was her family, whose world was her home. . . . She was the good angel of the hearthstone, the special providence of tender hearts and helpless hands, content to bear her burdens in the sequestered vale of life, her thoughts unperverted by false ambitions, and all unlooking for the great reward that crowned her love and toil.

“ But for the light that streamed from the deeds of him she bore, we would doubtless have never heard of the name of Mary Washington, and the grass that grew upon this grave had not been disturbed by curious footsteps or reverential hands. But it does not follow that she shines only in the reflection of her offspring’s fame. Her virtues were not created — they were only discovered by the marvelous career of her illustrious son. This memorial might indeed be due to her because of who she was, but it is far more due to her because of what she was. It is in her own right, and as the type of her sex, her people and her race, that she deserves this tribute-stone.”

## SUSANNAH BOYLSTON — ADAMS

JOHN ADAMS

*Second President of the United States, 1798-1801*

ONE of the most distinguished families America has produced has been the Adams family.

Henry Adams, the great-great-grandfather of John Adams, was an English emigrant, who came to this country in 1633 or 1634. He had eight sons and one daughter, and settled at Mount Wollaston, afterward known as Braintree, Massachusetts. The emigrant was allotted forty acres of land by the Boston authorities. He was a yeoman, a plain, unpretentious man of tact and ability. From what place he emigrated in England is a matter not fully established. Henry Adams left a will probated at Boston, June 8, 1647. Mention is made of five sons and one daughter, Ursula, and his wife, but her name is not given. This, however, is not strange, for in those days the names of mothers scarcely ever got in the limelight of publicity. Charles Francis Adams has well said, "The heroism of the females of the Revolution has gone from the memory of those who witnessed it, and nothing, absolutely nothing, remains upon the ear of the young of the present day, except the faint echo of an expiring general tradition."



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John Adams, the second President of the United States, had the following inscription placed on a column over the grave of Henry Adams.

“In Memory of Henry Adams, who took his flight from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire, England, and alighted with eight Sons near Mount Wollaston. One of the Sons returned to England; and after taking Time to explore the Country, four removed to Medfield and the neighboring Towns, and two to Chelmsford. One only, Joseph, who lies here at his left hand, remained here, who was an original Proprietor in the Township of Braintree, incorporated 1639. This Stone and several others have been placed in this Yard by a great-great-grandson from a Veneration of Piety, Humility, Simplicity, Prudence, Patience, Temperance, Frugality, Industry and Perseverance of his Ancestors, in Hopes of recommending an Imitation of their Virtues to their Posterity.”

If John Adams took just pride in his ancestry, the descendants of John Adams may be even more justly proud, for the brilliancy of the Adams family began with him. That their family has a just claim to distinction is well-grounded. Two of the descendants of Henry Adams signed the Declaration of Independence, namely, John and his cousin Samuel Adams. Both were members of the Continental Congress. No other American family has furnished a father and son to the office of President of the United States. The claim has been made

## *Susannah Boylston — Adams*

that more descendants of Henry Adams have been graduates of Harvard, Yale and other colleges, than of any other man who settled in America, but that claim might reasonably be disputed by the Taft family. "He who careth not whence he came careth little whither he goeth." A study of the geneological records of the Adams family furnishes proof that the members of that family have cared whence they came.

Susannah Boylston became the mother of the distinguished signer of the Declaration of Independence and second President of the United States. She was the daughter of Peter Boylston of Brookline, Massachusetts. She married John Adams, and their son was named for his father. The Boylston family was considered somewhat higher in the social scale than the Adams family, so that John Adams, Sr., married a woman his superior socially, and the same was true of the son when he married Abigail Smith. A peculiar feature of college standing in those days was to rank a student not according to scholarship, but according to the social standing of the family. We find John Adams in a class of twenty-four, rated number fourteen. This does not imply that there were thirteen distinct social classes above him, but that parents and grandparents of thirteen boys were in the upper crusts of that Colonial formation. The social standing of his mother's family lifted him a shade higher than his father's would have done.

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John Adams, Sr., was a farmer of small means, and added to his income by working at shoemaking. We have no particular record of the home life of the Adamses, but we know something of the parental authority of the New England home of those days; it was fiercely arbitrary. The rod was liberally applied in the home, the school and to the threshold of the college. Sports, games and social functions were rigorously chaperoned; still, boys and girls managed to have a fine time.

John Adams' parents were poor. The farm was not very productive, and although the parents were uneducated, both appreciated the value of an education and were quite willing to sacrifice and work hard in order that their eldest son might have an education. We can imagine what it meant to those hard-working parents to send a son through college. John entered Harvard at sixteen and graduated when only twenty. He was one of the best-educated young men of his day.

John and his wife were very religious people. He is known to history as Deacon John. The son was strictly brought up according to the notions of the Puritans. Knowing that the father was a Church Deacon of Puritan stock, and Susannah Boylston extremely pious, we can well believe that John was brought up "after the strictest sect." His mother's religious training was never effaced from his memory. Both parents had selected for him the career of a clergyman. But while religiously inclined, the re-



*Susannah Boylston — Adams*

ligious controversies of those days swung him away from the ministry, doubtless much to the disappointment of his mother. In his Diary he says, "Necessity drove me to this determination (i. e., to study law), but my inclination, I think, was to preach." He never ceased to be interested in the subject of religion. His mother's influence had not been in vain. Throughout his long career in public life, at home, abroad, when serving his country as Chief Magistrate, down to the day of his retirement from public life, when he presented to the people of Braintree, the old home town, a beautiful church, he manifested a keen interest in the subject of religion. As President of the United States, he established a precedent by issuing a Proclamation for a Day of Prayer; this he did on the twenty-third day of March, 1798. He issued a second proclamation for a Day of Prayer, March 6, 1799. Both papers are shot through with spiritual fervor, particularly the last. No clergyman could have been more clearly orthodox. Mr. Adams furnished a striking example of one occupying a high official position, showing forth the graces of a Christian character. While his devout mother may have been disappointed because he did not choose the ministry, she would have been more than satisfied could she have lived to read those finely balanced lines in his Proclamations. When the church was presented to his fellow townsmen of Quincy, formerly Braintree, the home of his parents, the place of his birth,

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a Christian mother's abiding influence in the moulding of character was clearly revealed. The home of John Adams and Abigail Smith, down to the day of their death, was a Christian home,—fine pattern of that of his father and mother, Deacon John Adams and his wife Susannah.

John Adams inherited from his mother that which was not always an asset, but sometimes a decided liability, plunging him at times into difficulty. His biographers are free to say that he possessed an "ungovernable temper," and his passions sometimes rose in the ascendancy. His eye, mild and benignant when in repose, when excited, expressed great vehemence of spirit. This passionate nature came from the high-spirited, fiery Boylsons. John Adams knew his weakness in this respect, and permitted his wife Abigail to censor many of his letters. When the opportunity presented itself, such letters as were written in the heat of passion when his soul was aflame were censored by Mrs. Adams, whose calm, discriminating judgment was appreciated by her distinguished husband. The Boylsons were a highly respected folk,—Boylston, Massachusetts, and Boylston Street, Boston, taking their name from the family name of Susannah Boylston.

We chronicle a few of the more important events in the career of John Adams. He married Abigail Smith, daughter of the Rev. William and Elizabeth Quincy Smith, of Weymouth, Massachusetts, February 24, 1764. He graduated from Harvard in

*Susannah Boylston — Adams*

1755, when twenty years of age. For two years he taught school, studying law in the meanwhile, and was admitted to the bar in 1758. Mr. Adams was one of five delegates chosen by Massachusetts to attend the first Continental Congress at Philadelphia in 1774. In 1775 he was again chosen. War had already begun at Lexington. This Congress chose George Washington as Commander-in-chief of the Colonial forces, and John Adams secured for him that commission. When George Washington retired to private life, and Mr. Adams had succeeded to the Presidency, he again nominated him as General-in-chief of the Armies of the United States; so Washington served twice as Commander-in-chief of the American armies, and John Adams had the honor of nominating him in both instances. Mr. Adams, through his superb leadership during the Revolution, won for himself the encomium, "The clearest head and firmest heart of any man in Congress;" he was also called "the Martin Luther of the American Revolution." In 1778 he served his country as Commissioner to France, and for the next ten years much of his time was spent serving as minister to England and Holland. When General Washington became the first President of the United States, in 1789, his friend and co-laborer, John Adams became Vice-President, and in 1797 he was elected the second President of the United States. His public career kept him most of the time from his home. This he deeply regretted, but no one felt

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his enforced absence more keenly than his devoted wife Abigail. The world of letters has been greatly enriched by the voluminous correspondence between husband and wife, which has been published.

When Mr. Adams was inaugurated the second President of the United States, his wife, who was not present, wrote him a letter on the day of the inauguration, February 8, 1797, which has become classic:

“ The sun is dressed in brightest beams  
To give thy honors to the day,”

and may it prove an auspicious prelude to each ensuing season. You have this day to declare yourself head of a Nation.

“ And now, O Lord my God, Thou has made Thy servant ruler over the people. Give unto him an understanding heart, that he may know how to go out and come in before this great people; that he may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this thy so great a people? ” were the words of a royal sovereign; and not less applicable to him who is invested with the chief magistracy of a Nation, though he wear not a crown nor the robes of royalty.

My thoughts and my meditations are with you, though personally absent; and my petitions to Heaven are that the things which make for peace may not be hidden from your eyes. My feelings are not those of pride or ostentation upon this occasion. They are solemnized by a sense of the obligations, the important trusts and numerous duties connected with it. That you may be enabled

*Susannah Boylston — Adams*

to discharge them with honor to yourself, with justice and impartiality to your country, and with satisfaction to this great people, shall be the daily prayer of your

A. A.

New York City was the first Capital of the United States. In 1790, the seat of Government was moved to Philadelphia, and during the closing months of President Adams' administration, the Capital was moved to Washington, D. C., a new city. Mr. Adams was the first President to live in the White House.

On March 3, 1801, President Adams labored far into the night to clear his desk of work that must be concluded under his administration. One of his last official acts was to appoint John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Jefferson had been elected to the Presidency over Adams by a majority of one vote. They had been friends of long standing, but the political fight had engendered hard and bitter feeling. Adams did not stay in Washington to see Jefferson inaugurated; in this we see evidence of a hasty judgment in which passion secured the mastery. The Boylston blood was up. Early on the morning of March the 4th, while Washington was still wrapped in slumber, he entered his carriage and left the city forever. He joined his wife at Braintree, where they were permitted to enjoy their home life for eighteen years,—after so many years of enforced separation, at last

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they were to enjoy the blessings of retirement to private life.

Mr. Adams died July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the day he had proclaimed in Congress the independence of the United States. His last words were, "Thomas Jefferson still survives," but in this he was mistaken, for his ancient colleague, with whom friendly relations had been restored, had passed away just one hour before, his last words being, "Independence forever." Mr. Adams and his wife Abigail lie buried side by side under the portico of the First Church, Quincy,—the building Mr. Adams had presented to his townspeople.



## JANE RANDOLPH — JEFFERSON

THOMAS JEFFERSON

*Third President of the United States, 1801-1809*

THE ancestors of Thomas Jefferson on the paternal side were from Wales. The chief glory of the Jefferson genealogy, considered such by the Jeffersons themselves, was the sturdy contempt of hereditary honors and distinctions. Peter Jefferson was born February 29, 1708. He was engaged to marry Jane Randolph, oldest daughter of an aristocratic and wealthy planter named Isham Randolph. Miss Randolph was born in London. Jefferson was a poor man, but he determined that he would own a home of his own before he invited a woman to become his wife, especially one who would leave a fine home and a congenial atmosphere socially; so he rode out into the wilderness, bought a tract of land one thousand acres in extent, none of it under cultivation. In two years, however, quite a change had been made, for scores of fine old trees had come crashing down, and in a nice clearing he built a log-house, and when finished he invited Jane Randolph to come and share his log-cabin home with him. At the time of their marriage she was less than twenty, while he was

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thirty years of age. Stoddard says the aristocratic bride brought no dowery with her except herself, but that was sufficient. Peter named his estate Shadwell, in honor of his wife, who had been born in a parish by that name in London. In this log-cabin home, Thomas Jefferson was born April 2, 1743. Jefferson, in after years, after he had become a national character, refused to divulge the place and date of his birth. Papers were found, however, which clearly established both. Soon after his inauguration in 1801, he was waited on by the mayor of Washington and other city officials, requesting him to communicate to them place and date of birth, as they were anxious that such an event that had brought such great glory upon the country, should be properly commemorated. Jefferson replied, "The only birthday which I recognize is that of my country's liberties."

Jane Randolph Jefferson was an excellent wife and a truly great mother. She possessed fine intellectual gifts, and was considered well educated for those days, comparing favorably with other Southern ladies occupying the same rank in society. She was a notable housekeeper, and had an exceedingly amiable and affectionate disposition. Thomas inherited from his mother his hopeful, cheerful temper and sunny disposition. Mrs. Jefferson also had a clear, strong understanding, was fond of writing, particularly letter writing, and we must bear in mind that her son wrote the immortal Declaration



## *Jane Randolph — Jefferson*

of Independence. Much of the success that came to Colonel Jefferson as a property owner and office holder in Virginia was due in no small measure to his wife, Jane Randolph.

Colonel Jefferson was a vestryman in the Church of England, and his wife a member of that church. The children were all reared and baptized in that church. When Thomas was three or four years old, he had been taught to repeat his prayers at his mother's knee. The religious education of the children in the Jefferson home had not been neglected. Jefferson related an incident in his life which occurred when he was but five years of age. He was impatient for school to be out, and, going outside, knelt behind the house, and there repeated the Lord's Prayer, hoping thereby to hurry up the desired hour. As a boy he knew his Bible, and carefully used his prayer-book all his life. The natural tendency of his mind was devotional.

Thomas's education began when he was five, by attending the sessions of a little English school in the vicinity. When nine he attended a Latin school and continued there until the death of his father, which occurred when he was fourteen years of age. His father was fifty when he died, and he left a widow less than forty. The Shadwell estate was left to Thomas. This was not unusual for those days. Colonel Jefferson's seeming favoritism was in strict accord with the law of primogeniture in vogue among Virginia landlords. When Peter Jef-

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person died he left his widow nine children to care for; the eldest was a daughter of seventeen, the youngest were twins, twenty-two months old. This mother's hands were more than full with the management of her estate and her young, large family. But her remarkable guiding genius was equal to the occasion. Colonel Jefferson's dying request was that his son Thomas should have a college education. During the next two years succeeding his father's death he was under private instruction, and when sixteen he entered William and Mary College, graduating in 1764. He took up the legal profession and was admitted to the bar in 1767.

Jefferson's mother was passionately fond of flowers, trees and music. We are not surprised to find these same esthetic tastes manifested in the gifted son. He found delight in every varied cloud in the sky, and every rich sunrise and sunset. His soul responded to the call of nature. He also inherited from his mother his fondness for music. He began to study this subject when a mere child. For twelve years he practised daily an average of three hours on his violin. At social functions, Thomas and his violin were always in evidence. The eldest daughter, Jane, was an accomplished singer and took special pride in the musical education of her brother. She was his home companion and friend. We can well imagine the many happy hours this family, with such fine musical taste, spent together during the long winter evenings, when huge

## *Jane Randolph — Jefferson*

logs were crackling and burning in the open fireplace, casting forth a cheerful glow of light and warmth.

After his father's death Thomas was thrown more largely in the company of his mother, and an abiding intimacy sprang up between them. She deepened his thoughtfulness, ripened his character, and faithfully instructed him in the manly qualities of a Christian,— so that at twenty-four he was a college graduate, a member of the bar, and did not gamble or drink; neither used tobacco nor profane language; such the influence of his mother upon him. Card-playing was a favorite pastime of his day, but Thomas did not know one card from another. He saw the evil in card-playing and turned away from it with a reaction which became a positive dislike, and led him afterwards to permit no cards at all in his home. In after life he strongly expressed his wonder, that one so young, so full of life, so surrounded by social pitfalls, did not stumble into any of them.

Posterity can never know how much the people of this country are indebted to Jane Randolph, the widowed mother of Thomas Jefferson, for the fine part she played in training him who was to write the Magna Charta of America. When this great state paper is praised, considerable credit must be given to a widowed mother for her sunny, genial, hopeful spirit, for her painstaking care, for her fidelity in bringing up this son who was left in her keeping when a lad of fourteen. She died March

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

30, 1776, just prior to the birth of our National Independence. Would that this mother might have lived to see that great day, with which forever after her son's name was to be associated.

Jefferson has been accused of being an agnostic and skeptic. The sorrows that came to him in the loss of his favorite sister, Jane, and in the death of his wife, may have disturbed his faith temporarily, but we believe not permanently. He once declared, "I am a Christian in the only sense in which Jesus wished anyone to be." He would probably not be considered orthodox according to the standards of the evangelical bodies, but no one can truthfully charge him with being an infidel or skeptic.

He believed in God, Creator of all things. In the Declaration of Independence we read the phrases, "Endowed by their Creator," and "Nature's God." In the preamble to the act for religious freedom he uses the following language, "Whereas, Almighty God hath created the mind free," and "the Holy Author of our religion." In his correspondence he uses such phrases as "merciful providence," and "a benevolent Creator." In a letter to namesakes, he advises them to "adore God," and "murmur not at the ways of providence."

During his life he contributed freely to the erection of Christian churches, and liberally supported them with his purse. He also contributed to Bible societies and other religious objects. He attended church as regularly as most members of the congre-

*Jane Randolph — Jefferson*

gation, sometimes going alone on horseback, when his family could not accompany him. He generally attended the Episcopal Church, though he held to the doctrines of the Unitarians. He invariably carried with him to church his prayer-book, and joined in the responses and prayers of the congregation. He was baptized in infancy in the Episcopal Church, married by an Episcopal clergyman; his wife lived and died a member of that church; his children were baptized in it, and when they were married the ceremony was performed by clergy of that church; the burial service of that church was read over those of his children who preceded him to the grave, and over his wife's body as well as over his own when he came to die. No one ever heard him utter one word of profanity, nor a word of impiety; and when he died, among his last words were, "I now resign my soul without fear to my God; and my daughter to my country."

## NELLY CONWAY — MADISON

JAMES MADISON

*Fourth President of the United States, 1809-1817*

THERE was a wedding at Port Conway, King George County, Virginia, on September the fifteenth, 1749, at the fine old residence of Francis Conway. On that day, his daughter, Nelly, then a maiden only seventeen years old, was led to the altar by James Madison, ten years her senior. Rives, in his biography of Madison, gives the Christian name of Mr. Conroy's daughter as Eleanor. Probably he thought that name had a more dignified sound than plain Nelly, especially when in after years applied to one who was to be known for all time as the mother of such a distinguished son. But there is not the slightest evidence that her Christian name was Eleanor,—in fact, the evidence counts against it. President Madison, when asked to make out a table of his ancestors, responded, and in that table he, himself, used Nelly, and not Eleanor, as the name of his mother. The son ought to have known, so we leave it and confess to a liking for it. Perhaps the parents when they selected the name Nelly for their daughter had no thought that she would ever have a son who would become the President of the United States.



## *Nelly Conway — Madison*

Mr. Madison took his bride to live on his estate, which in after years came to be known as Montpelier, Virginia. He was not a wealthy man, but was considered well-to-do. Virginia forests were not profitable in those days, and returns for even improved lands were very meagre. In the early part of 1751, Mr. and Mrs. Madison journeyed back to his wife's old home at Port Conway, and here on March the sixteenth, her first child, a son, was born. Twenty-one days after its birth, there was a christening, and the baby received the name of its father.

Nelly Conway Madison had all the brightness and freshness of youth, but she could scarcely be called a beautiful woman. She had all the graces of the typical Southern woman. She possessed a strong, forceful character, and of this she bore outward traces on her face. Her son, James, during the later years of his life, bore a striking resemblance to his mother. He also inherited from his mother his deep studious nature. When in college he frequently allowed himself but three hours of sleep out of the twenty-four. In her youth, Mrs. Madison had not been robust, but she enjoyed excellent health during the later years of her life. She believed in the simple life, was plain and unpretentious in her manner of living, and this obtained after her son had entered upon his distinguished career. She was held in high esteem by her large circle of relatives and friends, and none loved her more devotedly than her son, James. She was also noted for her

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piety, and from girlhood was a communicant of the Episcopal Church, though not confirmed until she had reached the advanced age of eighty years. But this, as it seemed, was really her first opportunity. The Episcopal Church in Virginia had almost wholly disappeared for a quarter of a century after the Revolution, and St. Thomas's parish had no regular rector. About eight miles from Montpelier services were conducted regularly by the famous blind Presbyterian preacher, James Waddell, and Mrs. Madison was a great admirer of his pulpit ministration. He would also, on occasion, conduct services in the Episcopal Church at Montpelier, and Mrs. Madison rarely failed to hear him. She was broad and liberal in her views, and was not in sympathy with a strict sectarianism. James was largely influenced by the religious views of his mother. In after years he became the apostle of religious liberty.

James was also indebted to his mother for rare intellectual gifts. His father was a man of intelligence and worth. He took an active interest in all public affairs. When he was a boy there were no schools in all Virginia for him to attend, and he determined that his son should not be handicapped in life as he had been. When James was a boy the schools had not attained a very high standard, and some of the most prosperous people provided private tutors for the early education of their sons. In the Madison home, the private tutor of James was his



*Nelly Conway — Madison*

mother. She instructed him in the first stages of his education, although burdened with numerous household cares. But she was in every way qualified, for when he was eighteen he was prepared to enter Princeton. He was an exceptionally fine student, inheriting, as we have previously stated, his studious habits from his mother. When only twelve he could read Spanish, Greek and Latin. Shadwell, the home of the Jeffersons, was only a day's ride from Montpelier, and Jefferson and young Madison were frequently thrown together.

In this day of rather loose thinking on the subject of religion, there is food for deep reflection on the part taken by the parents of James in their choice of a college for their son. Both were of the Episcopal faith. But the doctrinal tendencies of the faculty of William and Mary College was believed to be not only unorthodox, but repressive. The established church in Virginia was doing all in its power to repel her own young men who exhibited any tendencies to be disloyal to the mother country, or who gave expression to a larger human freedom. The Madisons were liberty-loving folk, and while liberal in their views, were thoroughly orthodox. So they turned away from William and Mary College, and in 1769 James Madison entered Princeton, which was to become the battle-ground of American freedom. James Madison, by a fine home training, was well-grounded in religious faith. He read widely religious literature, and even studied one

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year the Hebrew language, which was but little use except to those who were to enter the ministry. He graduated in three years. Thus we find three men who were destined to become Presidents of the United States pursuing a college course under a wholly different political and religious atmosphere,—John Adams at Harvard, Thomas Jefferson at William and Mary, and James Madison at Princeton.

James Madison was tenderly attached to his mother. She outlived her husband twenty-eight years. During her declining years she was the object of his anxious thought. When his father died, the old homestead passed into the hands of his son, James. He afterward built a fine mansion on the estate, but did not disturb the old home, owing to the deep attachment his mother had for it. It had been her home for many, many years. Every nook and corner in the old house seemed sacred to her; so the new mansion was attached to the old one. After Mr. Madison retired from the Presidency, he went back to Montpelier to live. He lived in the new mansion, but his mother could not give up her home in the old part. It had been endeared to her through the associations of a happy wedded life, and here she had reared her family of children. “Here she kept up her old-fashioned way of housekeeping, waited upon by servants, who grew old and faded away with her. She divided her time between her Bible and knitting, all undisturbed

*Nelly Conway — Madison*

by modern hours, changed customs, or even the elegant hospitalities of the mansion itself. She was the central point in the life of her distinguished son, and the chief object of his most devoted care to the end of her days. These were long, for she passed away at the ripe old age of ninety-eight years." Owing to her advanced years, her son followed her to the grave in seven years. She lived to enjoy the companionship of her distinguished son, after his retirement from the Presidency, eleven years,—a longer time, doubtless, than any other mother of a President.

## ELIZA JONES — MONROE

### JAMES MONROE

*Fifth President of the United States, 1818-1825*

JAMES MONROE was born on his father's farm, or plantation, as it was then called, and was located in Virginia. He was the fourth Virginian to become President of the United States. He had an ancestry and home environment of which to be proud. His father, Spence Monroe, had an early American ancestor known as Captain Monroe, who served in the army of Charles the First. Spence Monroe chose for his wife a beautiful Southern woman whose name was Eliza Jones. She came from a noted family, equally as patriotic and prominent as that of her husband. Miss Jones's brother, Joseph, served as the Judge of the District Court of Virginia, and was elected twice to serve as delegate to the Continental Congress. James was born in September, 1795, in what has been called the Athens of America, because it has been the home of so many distinguished statesmen. Spence Monroe's plantation was located in Westmoreland County, which lies between the Potomac and the Rappahannock rivers. Nearby was the birthplace of Washington; and here lived "Light-Horse" Harry Lee, and whose still more famous son, Robert E. Lee, was

to become a distinguished general in the Confederate army; and in King George County was the birthplace of James Madison; while not far distant was Shadwell, famous as the birthplace of Thomas Jefferson. Surely the environment, parentage and home atmosphere of James Monroe were of the highest order.

Napoleon once said, "What France needs is mothers"; our study reveals clearly that that was not lacking in the days of the early patriots. There were real mothers in those stirring days! How many of our distinguished men attribute the success that has come to them in no small measure to their mothers! Andrew Carnegie is among that number. A writer has said of Mr. Carnegie: "His devotion to her was exceedingly strong. She was the guardian angel of his life,—his saint, as he used to call her. In every trouble and sorrow she was his helper and comforter, and in every difficulty and perplexity his guide and counselor. . . . Never for a moment has he forgotten what she has done for him. He has often said he can never adequately estimate all that he owes to her strong will, her far-seeing judgment, and her loving, motherly influence. When he became possessed of great wealth, she still remained his constant companion, and accompanied him on all his holidays, both at home and abroad. While she lived he remained single, choosing to lavish upon her all the love and reverence of his nature. Now that she has passed away, he is never

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tired of singing her praises, and of recalling her goodness. . . . His mother, he once remarked, was the mainspring of all his hopes. For her he worked, for her sake alone he sought to acquire wealth, so that her old age might be spent in comfort and in peace. To his great joy she lived to the ripe old age of eighty." We can well believe that the mothers of those early days wielded an influence equally great, and were just as truly adored. That they were successful in their God-given task of nurturing and training their sons, is abundantly proved by the brilliant success that they achieved in life. These early mothers considered two things especially essential in developing the mind and in shaping the character of their sons, viz., a sound religious training and the school.

James Monroe was blessed with a liberal education. He was prepared for college at an early age. He completed his studies at William and Mary College when but seventeen. That was the year in which the Declaration of Independence was signed. His mother's brother had been a member of two Continental Congresses. We can well know how his own mind would be affected. Had he been a few years older, he would, undoubtedly, have been one of the signers himself. As it was, along with twenty-five or thirty other students of the college, schoolbooks were laid aside, and they volunteered their services in behalf of the cause of the Colonists. James Monroe stood with Washington, along with



*Eliza Jones — Monroe*

three thousand other Colonial soldiers, on the western bank of the Delaware, that cold, wintry night, and was among those who rowed across the icy river. He was leading the vanguard at the battle of Trenton and was wounded in the shoulder, proudly carrying the scar the balance of his life. He served gallantly during the campaigns of 1777 and 1778, and retired from the service with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. James Monroe's military career was of a high order. He held an important office during the War with Great Britain in 1812; also during the Seminole War; he also filled the chief legislative and executive offices of his native state; he represented his government at the Courts of France, Spain and England; he was a member of Madison's Cabinet, and twice President of the United States — the second time by an almost unanimous vote of the Electoral College. His name is given to an important political document, known the wide world over, and his administration has been called the "era of good-feeling," yet no adequate memoir has ever been prepared. This is the man concerning whom Thomas Jefferson once said, "James Monroe is so perfectly honest, that if his soul were turned inside out, there would not be found a spot on it." It surely paid Eliza Jones Monroe to train and influence a son in such a way as to earn high tribute from such an illustrious source. James Monroe's name is associated with important political events in the history of our country, covering a period of fifty years.



## ABIGAIL SMITH — ADAMS

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

*Sixth President of the United States, 1825-1829*

THE real cradle of American Independence is located at Braintree, Massachusetts, in the frame dwelling-house where John Adams and Abigail Smith began housekeeping. Here a son was born destined to become the President of the United States. It is one of the shrines of this great Republic. The home in which Washington was born was destroyed by fire when he was three years old; the frail cabin in which Lincoln first saw the light of day soon crumbled to the dust; true, the cabin home that sheltered the new-born babe of the Grants has been preserved, and removed to Columbus, Ohio; but here at Braintree stands the veritable rooftree that sheltered the earliest advocates of American Liberty. Piously, this ancient cradle of American Independence is cared for by the Adams Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Abigail Smith, who was the daughter of the Rev. William Smith, a prominent Congregational minister of Weymouth, Massachusetts, married John Adams, the son of a farmer of limited means. The Adams

*Elizabeth Quincy was her mother.*

## *Abigail Smith — Adams*

family was looked upon as the social inferior of the Smith and Quincy families. Adams had prepared himself for the legal profession, and that was another handicap, for that profession was not held in very high repute in those days. It was a new profession and looked upon as dangerous and even iniquitous. The grandparents of Abigail, the Honorable John Quincy and his wife, of Braintree, particularly frowned upon the union. "What! Abigail Smith marry one of the dishonest tribe of lawyers!" But they were duly married, and the bride's father seized upon the occasion as an opportunity to preach a special sermon, taking for his text: "For John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil."

Although Abigail's father was a New England clergyman and knew the value of culture derived through education, he did not seem to be concerned about providing for the education of his daughter. Abigail almost pathetically wrote, "My early education did not partake of the abundant opportunities which the present day affords, and which even our common schools now afford. I was never sent to any school." The cry of her soul for an education, which she lacked, is found in one of her letters to her husband: "If you complain of neglect of education in sons, what shall I say of daughters who every day experience the lack of it. With regard to the education of my own children, I feel myself soon out of my depth, destitute in every part

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of education. I most sincerely wish that some more liberal plan might be laid and executed for the benefit of the rising generation, and that our new Constitution may be distinguished for encouraging learning and virtue. If we mean to have heroes, statesmen and philosophers, we should have learned women. The world, perhaps, would laugh at me, but you, I know, have a mind too enlarged and liberal to disregard sentiment. If as much depends as is allowed upon the early education of youth, and the principles which are instilled take the deepest root, great benefits must arise from the literary accomplishments of women."

Thus wisely wrote the mother of John Quincy Adams. How her soul would rejoice to see this day, when the doors of our great institutions are thrown open just as widely to receive women as to receive men; and where all sorts of business pursuits, as well as the professions, are clamoring for women to enter! In her day there were no high schools for girls, and of course no colleges or professional schools. It was thought to be unwomanly for a woman to join a temperance society or an anti-slavery association. Legally, all the old common law disabilities of a woman still persisted. Woman's place was in her home; no career beckoned her to enter. It was no unusual thing for a girl to have no school advantages,—in fact, it was quite the customary thing. Even in staid old Massachusetts girls were rarely educated at the schools.

## *Abigail Smith — Adams*

That staid old colony, though boasting of her learned and educated men, sadly neglected the education of her daughters. The three R's were considered sufficient for them. "It was the fashion to ridicule female learning." She grew up without the intellectual training of the schoolroom, but she was surrounded by home influences of a literary and cultured character. Her father's profession and her father's library brought her in contact with literary friends. Among her happiest moments were those when she was curled up in a nook with a book. This woman who never went to school was to become the wife of the first American minister to England and the lady of the second President of the United States. She became one of the most polished and attractive correspondents this country has produced, and has been rightly called the Special Correspondent of Revolutionary days.

During the early days of the Revolution, while Mr. Adams was absent on business connected with the Colonial Government, Mrs. Adams was often confronted with many dangers, as well as to endure many hardships. Once her family was four months without flour, and in one of her letters she writes, "We shall very soon have no coffee, sugar, or pepper."

▲ Mrs. Adams' influence on her children was strong, inspiring and vital. The spirit of the Spartan was in her being. We do not wonder at this in view of the thrilling events that were taking place every

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day. John Quincy when seven years old read aloud to his mother Rollins' Ancient History, and every night, after he had repeated his evening prayer, she would hear him recite the ode of Collins, beginning

“ How sleep the brave who sink to rest  
By all their Country's wishes blest.”

While she reflected the Spartan spirit she manifested the greatest tenderness for her little family.

Mrs. Adams is described by William H. Seward as a woman of great beauty, high intellectual endowments, and combined with the proper accomplishments of her sex a sweetness of disposition with the patriotic devotion of her husband. History places her /“ among the most remarkable women of the Revolutionary period.” In February, 1775, Parliament had declared the Massachusetts Colony to be in a state of rebellion. Affairs were in a frightful condition in Boston. John Adams was in Philadelphia attending a session of the Continental Congress, of which he was a member. His family was in grave danger. In a letter to his wife, he says, “ In case of real danger, of which you cannot fail to have previous intimation, *fly to the woods with our children.*” The words tell only too clearly the frightful dangers to which the family was exposed. “ The woods ” — at that time, or at any moment, — might be full of prowling, painted savages. Yet, would John Adams rather have his family fall into the hands of savages, who knew neither mercy nor pity,



## Abigail Smith — Adams

than to have them run the risk of an impending danger elsewhere? John Quincy Adams writes concerning those anxious days: "For the space of twelve months, my mother, with her infant children, dwelt, liable any hour of the day or night to be butchered in cold blood, or taken into Boston as hostages by any foraging or marauding detachment of men, like that actually sent forth on the nineteenth of April to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams, on their way to attend the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. My father was separated from his family on his way to attend the same Congress, and there my mother and her children lived in danger of being consumed with them all in a conflagration, kindled by a torch in the same hands which on the seventeenth of June lighted the fires of Charlestown."

When John Quincy was seven years old, his mother took him to one of the high hills, in the neighborhood of her home, and he clambered on his mother's knee, and listened to the sounds of the battle of Bunker Hill and watched Charlestown go up in the flames. At the *very hour* in which Abigail Adams and her little son were watching the battle of Bunker Hill, her husband, John Adams, with sagacious forethought, was securing for Colonel Washington a commission as Commander-in-chief of the Colonial forces. The care of John Quincy devolved almost entirely on the mother in his early childhood, owing to the absence of Mr. Adams, in

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Philadelphia. His mother, who never went to school, was his first instructor, but she was well qualified for her task. Edward Everett has said that there seemed to be no stage as that of boyhood in the life of John Quincy Adams. When nine years of age he wrote his father a fine, interesting letter. "He behaves like a man," was the verdict of those who knew him from boyhood. No man ever sat in the Presidential chair more fitted through mind culture in the schools than John Quincy Adams. He entered Harvard in 1786, graduating with honors. He was also instructed in the schools of Paris, and the University of Leyden. Having completed his scholastic studies, he began the study of law. For well-nigh twoscore years he was employed like his father in the service of his country.

When John Quincy Adams was appointed Minister to Holland, his father wrote to his wife as follows: "The President has it in contemplation to send your son to Holland." The father made use of the words "your son" in order to convey to the mother how large a part she had had in training that son. When appointed Minister to Berlin by his own father, he was reluctant to accept the post, because it came from his father, but he wrote his son that it was the expressed wish of George Washington that he should accept. In response, he wrote his mother: "I know, with what delight your truly maternal heart has received every testimonial of Washington's favorable voice. It is among the most precious



*Abigail Smith — Adams*

gratifications of my life to reflect upon the pleasure which my conduct has given my parents. How much, my dear mother, is required of me to support and justify such a judgment as that which you have copied in your letter."

John Quincy Adams adored his mother, and in speaking of her he used this word many times. One of the most tender and beautiful tributes ever accorded a mother by a son was that bestowed by him, and which is published in his "Diary, — 1874-1877":

There is not a virtue that can abide in the female breast, but it was the ornament of hers. She had been fifty-four years the delight of my father's heart, the sweetness of all his toils, the comforter of all his sorrows, the sharer and brightness of all his joys. It was but the last time I saw my father, that he told me with an ejaculation of gratitude, to the giver of every good and perfect gift, that in all the vicissitudes of his fortunes, through all the good reports, and evil reports of the world, in all his struggles, and in all his sorrows, the affectionate participation, and cheering encouragement of his wife, had been his never failing support, without which he was sure, he would never have lived through them. . . .

Never have I known another human being, the perpetual object of whose life, was so unremittingly to do good. Yet so unostentatious, so unconscious, even of her own excellence, that even the objects of her kindness, often knew not whence it came. She had seen the world, — its glories, without being

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dazzled; its vices and follies, without being infected by them. She had often severely suffered from fits of long and painful sickness, always with calmness and resignation. She had a profound but not an obtrusive sensibility. She was always cheerful, never frivolous; she had neither gall nor guile.

Her attention to the domestic economy of her family was unrivalled — rising with the dawn and superintending the household concerns with indefatigable and all-foreseeing care. She had a warm and lively relish for literature, for social conversation, for whatever was interesting in the occurrences of the time, and even in political affairs. She had been during the War of the Revolution, an ardent patriot, and the earliest lesson of unbounded devotion to the cause of this country, that her children received, was from her. She had the most delicate sense of propriety of conduct, but nothing uncharitable, nothing bitter. Her price, indeed, was above rubies.

Such the tribute a most distinguished son paid to a most remarkable mother.

John Adams and Abigail Smith were Christians. Their son, John Quincy, the polished man of letters, the diplomat, the statesman, never got away from the influence of that Christian home. Many years before he had worn the highest honors in the gift of the American people, he declared, "The God of my father and mother shall be my God." He remained true to this declaration. He forgot it not when crowned with the highest honors in the gift of the American people. Abbott says:

*Abigail Smith — Adams*

When his body was bent, and his hair silvered by the lapse of fourscore years, yielding to the simple faith of a child, he was accustomed to repeat every night before he slept, the nursery prayer his mother taught him in his infant years. There is a great moral beauty in the aspect of this venerable, world-worn man, folding his hands, and closing his eyes, as he repeated in simplicity, the nursery prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take,  
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.

## ELIZABETH HUTCHINSON — JACKSON

ANDREW JACKSON

*Seventh President of the United States, 1829-1837*

**A**NDREW JACKSON'S father, whose name also was Andrew, emigrated with his wife and two sons from Carrickfergus, Ireland, to South Carolina in 1765. Andrew's mother's name was Elizabeth Hutchinson. Both parents, of Scotch-Irish descent, were ardent Presbyterians. Their only capital was their hands and a disposition to work, — and work hard. They settled at Waxhaw, near the boundary line between North and South Carolina. Here Andrew built a log-house, and in it he sheltered his family. The Jacksons' neighbors were few, and as poor as themselves. When they had succeeded in clearing the land and raising one crop, the father suddenly died. He had lived in obscurity, and in obscurity he was buried. Mrs. Jackson, with her fatherless boys, rode to the graveyard in the wagon that carried her husband's rude casket to the grave. He was buried in a field, no one knows exactly where. The mother was left penniless. Mrs. Jackson went directly from the grave of her husband to the log-cabin home of her sister, and here, on March 15, 1767, a few days after her husband's burial, this son was born.

## *Elizabeth Hutchinson — Jackson*

What a scene! Who would dream that a future President of the United States could possibly come out of such lowly surroundings? Here was the pain-crushed, heart-stricken widow — no home of her own, a clotheless babe, coarse fare, poverty and wild surroundings. The probabilities are that she never returned to the log-cabin that had been built by her husband, and in which he died. Jackson was the first of our Presidents of humble origin. As her invalid sister's housekeeper, Mrs. Jackson worked hard, washing and mending and cooking, in order to help pay for the support of herself and children, and like most women of Scotch-Irish blood, she was strong, capable and thrifty, a fine housekeeper and a wise and affectionate mother. She had a fair education, according to the standard of education among women in those primitive days.

Part of the first ten years of Andrew's life was spent with his Uncle Crawford on a farm. Here he learned to do the general work such as a lad of his years could perform. In the winter he attended a log schoolhouse located in a pine forest nearby. The support of the teacher was pledged by the responsible farmers of the neighborhood; not much more was taught than the three R's. Mrs. Jackson was anxious that her youngest son, whom she fairly idolized, who had never seen his father, should have a liberal education. She had fond hopes that he might some day become a Presbyterian minister. She was very devout, and regularly and prayerfully

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read her Bible. She had been impressed by many striking incidents in the Bible, where godly parents had consecrated their children to the Lord. So in simple trust she consecrated Andrew to the service of God. In her devout and simple faith she believed all things, hoped all things. Her fond hopes were never to be realized, but because of such hopes her mother love was elevated and ennobled, and the childhood days of Andrew were enveloped with a spiritual atmosphere that fairly breathed of heaven. His nature easily responded to those religious influences. He loved and revered his mother with a passionate devotion. Her religious habits, — praying on her knees by her bedside, her daily Bible reading, her custom of having him read the Bible, and the prayers she taught him at her knee, with a hand laid lovingly on his head, — all these sacred influences entered into his soul and stayed there forever. As the years went by and Andrew's character developed, her hopes regarding his future intensified. She toiled, scrimped, schemed, impoverished herself in order that Andrew might be helped. But Andrew Jackson was destined not to preach the Gospel of the Son of God, but the gospel of patriotism: his church was to be the military camp; his pulpit the war-horse. Suppose he had become a preacher, knowing how brave, passionate and uncompromising he was; he would, as a preacher, have been commanding, fearless — a spiritual dynamic to be reckoned with.



## *Elizabeth Hutchinson — Jackson*

In his early life Jackson drifted a long way off from the coveted desire of his mother. Possibly it was after her death. One biographer says, "He was the most roaring, rollicking, game-cocking, horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow that lived in Salisbury"; and another declares that he sowed a big crop of wild oats in his early manhood. Be that as it may, he never got away from his mother's influence and prayers, and a mother's prayers were in the end answered.

Andrew was nine years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed, and fourteen when the war reached Waxhaw. The schools were closed. Andrew and his brother Robert were at home when Tarleton and his dragoons thundered along the red roads of Waxhaw and dyed them a deeper red with the "blood of the surprised militia." Their oldest brother, Hugh, had already given his life in behalf of the Colonial cause. The old meeting house at Waxhaw was speedily converted into a hospital, and here the worst cases of the hundred and fifty wounded militia men, victims of Tarleton's dragoons, were carried. Mrs. Jackson was one of the first of the women of the settlement to turn in and help alleviate the distress of her wounded countrymen. Robert and Andrew were among the young patriots who volunteered to ward off the Tories at Waxhaw. Both were taken prisoners. A Tory officer commanded Andrew to blacken his boots. Andrew replied, "Sir, I am a prisoner of war, and claim to be

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treated as such." The officer glared at him like a wild beast, and aimed a desperate blow at his head. Andrew broke the force of the blow with his hand, and received two wounds, a deep gash on the head and another on the hand. The scars from these he carried to his dying day. The officer turned next to Robert and ordered him to blacken his boots. Robert saw the wounds of his brother and the fresh blood pouring from them, and had every reason to fear a like assault in case he should refuse. But he did refuse, and the officer dealt him a terrific blow on the head, which levelled him to the floor and disabled him. An aged relation, commenting on the scene, said, "I reckon Andy thought of it at New Orleans." The two wounded Jackson boys suffered intensely as a consequence of the inhuman treatment of the Tories. Both boys, soon after, were stricken with the smallpox. The devoted mother heard of their pitiable plight; — prisoners — wounded — smallpox. She strove with all the might of mother love for their deliverance, and finally succeeded in effecting an exchange of prisoners. When the mother first saw her two boys in their pitiable condition — the severe gash on Robert's head had not even been dressed, — she was filled with astonishment and overcome with horror. In two days after they reached home Robert was a corpse and Andrew a raving maniac. But a mother's nursing and a strong constitution pulled Andrew through. After he was well on the way to recovery, this patriotic

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and heroic mother heard of the sufferings of the prisoners of war at Charleston, and volunteered her services. There were no Red Cross nurses in those days, but there were devoted women who were pioneers of Red Cross work. Tradition says that Mrs. Jackson made the long journey of a hundred and sixty miles on foot. Andrew Jackson, however, has always doubted that. He thinks some way was surely provided to get his mother to her destination. But her rough journey through life was nearly over. The widowed mother had given two sons, both under age, to the cause of liberty; one more sacrifice was to be exacted of her. She was seized with ship fever, and soon after died, a martyr to her country's welfare. She died in the service of her country as truly as the colonists who shed their blood at Bunker Hill or Lexington. Andrew never saw his mother again. The only legacy this poor mother had to leave her orphan son was a pathetic little bundle of clothes, which was sent to him at Waxhaw, — and a stainless character, and the memory of a good mother and faithful Christian. Andrew mourned deeply over his great loss. He owed her his very life. She was buried so obscurely that her grave has never been discovered. President Jackson made every effort possible to identify it. The boy, a little over fourteen years of age, was left an orphan, sick, sorrowful, homeless. Parton, in his "Life of Andrew Jackson," calls him "an orphan of

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the Revolution ”; but the great heart of the people of this Republic adopted him as son.

Jackson was now an orphan and penniless. But he had what makes any boy or man rich,—the memory of a devoted, heroic mother. Such a boy or man has an inspiration that is like martial music on the field of battle. How rich indeed the world, because such noble women have lived! Fatherless, motherless, brotherless, penniless, homeless, a lad in his fifteenth year; surely not a very brilliant outlook for any boy. But he knew of his mother's desire for him to have an education. For a period of two years we know practically nothing about him. But we have reason to believe he used that time as best he could toward improving his mind, for at eighteen he was studying law in the office of Spruce McKay, and two years later, when only twenty, Andrew Jackson was admitted to the bar.

Andrew Jackson's military career began when a lad of fourteen. He was captured by the British in 1781; maltreated and left to die of smallpox, his release from prison secured by his mother, and his life spared largely through her efforts. In the war of 1812 he organized 2,500 militia, and was commissioned major-general of the militia. In 1814 he became a major-general in the regular army. He struck the decisive blows in the South which brought the war of 1812-1814 to a close. He won the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, and the war was at an end. Jackson came to the presidential chair

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as a military hero. But he was much more than that. He possessed great native powers and inflexible honesty and an integrity unassailable.

Andrew Jackson, to the end of his days, cherished with deepest veneration the memory of his mother. He was little given to shedding tears, but he did shed them once on a memorable occasion on account of his mother. It was during his candidacy for the presidency in 1828. The floodgates of vituperation and slander opened upon him. So malignant was party animosity that not only was he assailed with vindictive falsehood, but also his wife and his mother. Passing strange that party politics would stoop so low as to assail the character of a mother who had given two sons and her own life as a sacrifice for her country. During the campaign his wife once found him in tears. In response to her look of surprise and sympathy, he pointed to a paragraph reflecting on his mother, and said,

“Myself I can defend; you I can defend; but now they have assailed the memory of my mother!”

He loved to speak of his mother's firmness, good sense, and of her capacity and compassionate heart. He loved to quote her maxims concerning the conduct of life, especially one: “Never to injure another, nor to accept from another an injury unre-dressed.” Often in the heat of argument he would quote some homely saying, with the remark, “That I learned from my good old mother.” How little



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that "good old mother" knew what the result of her maternal faithfulness was to be! How little she dreamed that in her lowly sphere and in her humble, pious way she was training a hero, a gallant soldier, a President of the United States! She had imparted to him through her valuable life, by precept and example, an education that could not be acquired in the schools. From her he had learned to believe in God, his word, in virtue, and in the sacredness of woman's purity and love.

"Happy be  
With such a mother: Faith in womankind  
Beats in his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him."

Andrew Jackson had married a woman who was a devoted Christian. He cherished the memory of her religious life as he did that of his mother. He built a small brick church on the grounds of the Hermitage, where he resided. Here the members of his family gathered for worship. These were among the happiest moments of Rachel Jackson's life. She urged her husband to join the church, but he replied, "My dear, if I were to do that now, it would be said all over the country that I had done it for political effect. I cannot do it *now*, but I promise you that when I am once more clear of politics, I will join the church." Such is politics. Even a man's best motives are misconstrued and turned as a weapon against him. Rachel Jackson lived to see her hus-



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band elected President of the United States, but she died before he was inaugurated. The grief of this great, strong man was deep. When he went to Washington to be inaugurated, it was said he had aged twenty years in a night.

When the eight years of his term of office were over, he retired to the Hermitage. The people of Nashville met him with outstretched arms and tearful faces. He was now well along in years, seventy years of age. He was *their* President. He had come home to spend the balance of his life, and to die with them. He was through with politics. He was now going to carry out his promise made to his wife, and a mother's prayers were to be answered, and new glory added to a vanished mother's influence. Andrew Jackson was going to join the little Hermitage Church. The night of decision was full of prayer and meditation. Visions of a sainted mother and wife were no doubt constantly before his mind. One morning, in 1843, the little church was crowded to see ex-President Jackson make a public confession of the Christian religion. He went home to read his Bible more carefully than ever, and for thirty-five years he had never read less than three chapters a day. He died on Sunday, June 8, 1845, aged seventy-eight. His family and servants were gathered about him. "My dear children," he said, "Do not grieve for me; it is time I am going to leave you; I am well aware of my situation. I have suffered much bodily pain,

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but my sufferings are but as nothing compared with which our Blessed Saviour endured upon the accursed cross, that all might be saved who put their trust in Him. . . . I hope and trust to meet you all in heaven, both black and white." Then he kissed each one, his eyes resting affectionately last of all upon his granddaughter Rachel, named for his wife. Two days before he died he had said, "Heaven will not be heaven to me if I do not meet my wife there." But Rachel Jackson was there to welcome him home, and so was his long-time sainted mother. Who can picture that meeting!

## MARY HOES — VAN BUREN

### MARTIN VAN BUREN

*Eighth President of the United States, 1837-1841*

**I**N the village of Kinderhook, Columbia County, New York, stood the unpretentious tavern of Abraham Van Buren, and in this tavern was born a son who became the eighth President of the United States. The tavern was one story and a half high, with a steep roof and two front doors. Long ago it was destroyed, and the present building now regarded by strangers as the birthplace of Martin Van Buren is mere fiction. On tearing down the old building, the initials M. V. B. were found cut into one of the beams of the cellar, doubtless by the youthful hand of Martin Van Buren. The tavern was popular in those days, and stage-coach travelers made up most of the patronage. On May 2, 1759, the English engineer, James Montresser, writes in his journal of leaving New York and breakfasting at Kinderhook, May 5. Mr. Van Buren was not solely dependent upon his tavern for a living, for he also worked a small farm in connection with it. On the farm he raised supplies for his family, the public table, and somewhat more for market. An editorial in the New York *Herald*, May 3, 1837, referred to Martin Van Buren as "a common country lawyer

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who began life trundling cabbages to market in Kinderhook." In this there was no doubt a grain of truth, but there was no reflection on Martin Van Buren in such a statement, though it was intended to count as such. Abraham Van Buren was an upright and intelligent man, whose virtuous conduct and amiable temper enabled him to pass through a long life not only without an enemy, but without being involved in contention or controversy.

Jan Tysse Goes was the grandfather of the mother of Martin Van Buren. The family name "Goes" changed later to "Hoes" in this country, was a name of distinction in Holland. This should not be overlooked from the standpoint of eugenics and heredity. Mr. Hoes, as he became known in this country, was one of the Freeholders of Kinderhook Patent, under date 1686. His son, Johannes Dirkse Hoes, was born in 1700, and lived to be ninety-seven years of age. He was a farmer and one of the largest taxpayers of Kinderhook. He had several children, among them Mary Hoes, born 1747, at Kinderhook. This influential farmer's daughter was destined to become the mother of the son who graced the Presidential chair at Washington.

Mary Hoes had married for her first husband Johannes Van Alen. At his death she was left a widow with three children. One son, James I. Van Alen, became distinguished as a lawyer. He served as surrogate of Columbia County for two terms, Judge of the County Court, and was elected

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to Congress. Thus a distinguished half-brother of Martin Van Buren bore eloquent testimony that ability of a high order was inherited from the mother. Mrs. Van Alen married for her second husband Abraham Van Buren, and on December 5, 1782, a son was born, named Martin. Ten days later he was baptized by the Rev. Johannes Ritzema. The sponsors were his uncle and aunt, Peter Van Buren, an Elder in the Reformed Church, and Katerina Quackenbos.

Martin, the eldest born, was needed at home to assist his father on the farm during much of the year, and his schooling was largely confined to the winter months, as was the custom of those days. Like Lincoln, he had an inherent thirst for knowledge, and he possessed also a resoluteness of purpose to secure an education, though confronted by difficulties. He made the best possible use of such advantages as he had, devoting his evenings, both summer and winter, to reading and study. His education, which was begun in the miserable, half-lighted school-house on Chatham Street, was completed in the more pretentious Kinderhook Academy. When fourteen years of age the public school was behind him, and at this early age he entered the law office of Judge Francis Sylvester. The law required seven years spent in such study, by one not a college graduate, before admittance to the Bar. This boy, who left school when fourteen, was admitted to the Bar in 1803, after seven years of preparation in the

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office of one of the most influential lawyers of Columbia County, when but twenty-one years of age. Such persistency and pluck are rarely surpassed by the boys of today who have no such handicap in early life.

Martin's mother, Mary Hoes Van Buren, was very attractive in appearance, and her son Martin when twenty-one years of age was considered the handsomest young man for miles around, and was a great social favorite. Mrs. Van Buren's manners were pleasing, and her Christian virtues added charm to her character. She possessed to an unusual degree a quiet, easy, graceful manner, and was perfectly at home whether in the company of the rustics of the community or with those who moved in the upper circles of society. She never seemed to be embarrassed. The question has been asked by many, where did her son Martin acquire that peculiar neatness and polished manner he wore so lightly, which served every turn of domestic, social and public intercourse? No answer was forthcoming. A writer says, truly it was not indigenous to the social circle of Kinderhook, neither was it essentially Dutch. It could hardly be called natural, although it seemed so natural to him. It was not put on, for it was never put off. As you saw him once, you saw him always, punctilious, polite, self-possessed. Our answer is this: It was not an acquired polish, but he inherited that fine grace of manner from his mother, a grace which was one of her charming



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assets. Martin Van Buren gracefully accommodated himself to existing social conditions, whether among the rustics of the neighborhood, at the Court of St. James, or at high social functions at the White House.

A writer has said that Mr. Van Buren "owed nothing to birth or ancestry, and nothing to property or patronage"; with this we take issue. It is true his parents were poor, and Martin was not born with a gold spoon in his mouth. They were unable to give him a college education; they were not able to surround him with luxuries, or with such refinements and culture as come from travel. Abraham Van Buren had no high-sounding title, he was a country tavern-keeper and farmer. But is it of no profit to be born of plain-living and high-thinking parents? Seeds of wisdom and morality are best sown in the family circle. Neither school nor wealth can take the place of fine parental advice and example. Where children assemble three times a day around the family table and hear discussions on the maxims of piety, industry, economy and patriotism — these things count for much. The best teacher is the wise parent; the best school is the home. Here Abraham Van Buren and his wife presided, and were at their best. An author has well said that to his parents in no small degree, he was "indebted for his extraordinary command over his temper on all occasions, his strong attachments for his friends, and his amiable social qualities, as well as his benevolent

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disposition, his friendly relations with all, and the blameless purity of his moral character." He who inherits from either father or mother such fine social and moral qualities has inherited that which is worth more than an inheritance of bonds or mortgages. While the historian or the biographer has paid tribute largely to the genealogy traced from the paternal side according to the English custom, and has ignored the maternal influence, a close student will discover that Martin Van Buren inherited those strong social charms and excellent moral qualities largely from his mother, and these were among the things that in after years made him irresistible. He was a politician, but when he believed himself to be in the right, he moved at once into the realm of a full-orbed statesman, and nothing could move him from his position. He easily preferred defeat at the polls rather than sacrifice what he believed was right.

Mary Hoes Van Buren was active and ambitious, and very fond of politics, which was rather unusual for a woman in those days. How her soul would have rejoiced had she lived in this day of rare opportunity for women! Abraham Van Buren cared but little for politics — if he held political office at all, it was merely a petty one. How easy to trace to its origin the ambitious spirit which possessed the soul of young Martin and his passion for politics! All of this came from his mother. He determined to excel in life, and he realized that if he did, he

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must do so without the benefits of a polished education, wealth or influential friends. He was "undismayed by persecution, and unruffled by the petty arts of loquacity and slander." He heroically pressed forward in the race before him. Lord Bacon had said, "He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men hath a hard task." But Van Buren aspired not simply for eminence among men, but for pre-eminence, and history declares that he won out. The historian says that no man in the history of our country held so many public offices as Martin Van Buren. In 1803, when slightly less than twenty-one, he was admitted to the Bar. He has been called a lawyer and a politician before reaching his majority. Four years later, in 1807, he was admitted to practise in the Supreme Court of the State.

1808-13, County Surrogate.

1813, State Senator.

1815, Attorney General.

1820, State Senator.

1821, United States Senator.

1827, Re-elected United States Senator.

1828, Governor of New York.

1828, Secretary of State under President Jackson.

1831, Minister to the Court of St. James.

1832, Vice-President of the United States.

1836, President of the United States.

Chauncy M. Depew has said, "For nearly a quarter of a century Martin Van Buren was the actual ruler

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of the Republic, through his control and management of the dominant party. He also gave political form and substance to the anti-slavery sentiment."

Mrs. Van Buren was a consistent Christian and member of the old Dutch Reformed Church at Kinderhook. This church was organized as a Mission in 1677, and as an independent church in 1712. There are only five churches older than this one between New York and Albany. This was the church the Van Burens regularly attended. Martin Van Buren inherited from his mother his deep interest in the church. While he was not a communicant, he was regular in his attendance upon its services. As a lad he sat in the Van Buren family pew. After he had won fame he retained his interest in the church. When President of the United States his interest did not abate. Upon retirement, when he came back to live amidst the scenes of his boyhood, he still kept an abiding interest in the village church. Rev. Edward A. Collier, D.D., who was pastor of this church for forty-three years, and who has resided in Kinderhook for fifty-six years, and has written a comprehensive volume on "A History of Old Kinderhook," informed us that the Van Buren pew was on the right-hand side of the church, facing the pulpit. Martin Van Buren had a habit of leaning his head against the wall during the service, and a spot on the wall marked the place where his head rested — mute evidence of regularity in church attendance. He was very susceptible to a draught,

## *Mary Hoes — Van Buren*

and would sit in church with a glove thrown lightly over his head to protect himself. To this old church, the church of his mother, the church in which he was christened, the church he attended as a boy, the church he attended when honors had come to him, the church he attended regularly after he retired to private life — to this church his careworn body was brought for the last funeral rites. When he died, July 24, 1862, in his eightieth year, it is not strange that his pastor should be found seated by his side. Neither are we surprised to know that his last words were addressed to his faithful spiritual adviser, which were, "There is but one reliance, and that is upon Christ, the free Mediator of us all."

The funeral services were largely attended. The residents of Columbia County were laying to rest their most distinguished citizen, who had brought honor and fame not only to the county that had given him birth, but to the nation at large. Everybody loved Martin Van Buren as a friend. The funeral services were held first at Lindenwald, where the Rev. J. Romeyn Berry offered prayer, and then in the village church of his ancestors and kindred, where he himself from boyhood had given his habitual and reverent attendance. The edifice, especially the unoccupied pew of the Van Burens, was heavily draped with black. Martin Van Buren lies buried in the village cemetery at Kinderhook, and by his side sleeps his wife, Hannah Van Buren,



## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

to whom he had been married in 1807, but who had died in 1819. During the balance of his life, forty-seven years, he remained a widower. Near his grave are the graves of his father, Captain Abraham Van Buren, and his mother, Mary Hoes Van Buren. His father died in 1817, and his mother in 1818. Beautiful tributes are inscribed on the marble shafts over the graves of his parents. If they had not been written by Martin Van Buren himself, they at least had been approved by him. We believe he wrote them himself. In both tributes Christ the Mediator is exalted, and this was the theme of his religious life, and the last spoken word at his death. This tribute is paid to his mother.

Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Mary Van Buren, relict of the late Captain Abraham Van Buren, died on the 16th day of February, A. D. 1818, in the 71st year of her age. Her long life was adorned by domestic virtues of the most useful kind. The early profession of the religion of a crucified Jesus, which she made, she sustained to the end, with that undeviating fidelity which proved the foundation to have been laid in the heart, and her life and conversation characterized her piety by bringing forth abundantly fruit meet for repentance.

Faith hath an overcoming power,  
It triumphs in the dying hour,  
Christ is our life, our joy, our hope,  
Nor can we sink with such a prop.



## ELIZABETH BASSETT — HARRISON

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

*Ninth President of the United States, 1841*

WE do not find the theory to be true in the study of the family history of the Adams and Harrison families, that the descendants of worthily distinguished men are short-lived. While Virginia has produced many a worthy name that will forever adorn the page of American history, none is more honorable than that of Harrison. About the middle of the seventeenth century the first Harrison settled in that state.

Benjamin Harrison, the father of William Henry Harrison, was a patriot of high rank. His father warned him that unless he was more cautious in his speech, tempered in his words, and manifested less violence toward the mother country, he would surely hang for it. But this warning had no effect on Benjamin Harrison. In 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses took upon itself the character of a State Convention. Seven delegates were elected to represent Virginia in the first Continental Congress. Thomas Jefferson said he knew all the men, and there was no more perfect representative of the people than big, bluff, burly Ben Harrison. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress of 1774-5-6.

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

John Hancock was elected President of the Congress of 1774. He showed some hesitancy about accepting, whereupon Ben Harrison picked him up bodily in his big, brawny arms, and placing him in the President's chair, said, "We will show Mother Britain how little we care for her, by making a Massachusetts man President whom she has excluded from pardon by public proclamation." Benjamin Harrison was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. When that immortal document was being signed, Harrison, who was a portly man, turned to Elbridge Gerry, delegate from Massachusetts, who was slim, and said, as he lifted his hand from the document he had just signed, "When the hanging scene comes, I shall have all the advantage over you; it will be over with me in a minute, but you will be kicking in the air an hour after I am gone."

Benjamin Harrison was a farmer. His plantation was located at Berkeley, Charles City County, Virginia. He married Miss Elizabeth Bassett, daughter of Colonel William Bassett. Miss Bassett also came from patriotic stock, and in some way was related to Martha Washington. She became the mother of seven children. She had all the qualities that were vested in her patriotic husband. Generous to a fault. Remarkable in her youth for her beauty, and still more eminent for her piety. William Henry Harrison, the youngest son, was born at Berkeley, February the ninth, 1773. He was

*Elizabeth Bassett — Harrison*

peculiarly fortunate in his birth. Patriotism was at white heat, and the stirring events happening in rapid succession must have operated powerfully upon the mind of the young mother.

Owing to the absence of Benjamin Harrison from home to participate in the responsible and momentous duties which the perilous condition of his country imposed upon him, the care of the children largely devolved upon the mother, and they also came under her motherly influence. She was equal to the emergency. The critical condition of public affairs furnished her in her retirement with material for serious reflection, and increased in her soul a firmness, purity, and devotion of mind, mingling in beautiful harmony, and which qualified her to pour into the ears of her children the most valuable lessons of patriotism and religion. No scene ever produced, more replete with touching interest, or attractive beauty, than that of this young mother, instructing her little boy in the principles of patriotism and piety.

Could that mother have lifted the veil of the oncoming years and have beheld the brilliant future of her son, — now radiant with smiles and innocence, — yet destined to encounter danger, to march through the wilderness, to battle with savages, to win in political conquest, and then to behold the crowning day, when he became President of the United States — surely her happiness would be complete.

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

When William was fourteen years of age he was sent to Hampden and Sidney College. His father desired him to become a physician. He studied medicine in the office of Doctor Leiber, of Richmond, and later was sent to Philadelphia to study under Doctor Benjamin Rush, considered to be one of the greatest physicians in America. While en route, his father suddenly died. While it was thought he was qualified for that profession, he abandoned the idea. His friends urged him to carry out his father's wishes, but he had never been personally inclined toward the profession, and was glad to be released from any further obligation in that direction. He had a plan of his own. He aspired to be a soldier. Could Benjamin Harrison, the father, or Elizabeth Bassett, the mother, marvel at that? His father having died in April, 1791,—when he was but eighteen years old, and his mother the year following, he was now an orphan. He was thrown upon his own resources, and had to fight alone the battles of life. But he was a good fighter.

Through the influence of "Light Horse" Harry Lee, he received his commission of ensign in the First Regiment, United States Artillery. The commission was signed by President Washington, who had been a warm friend of his father. He was now but eighteen years of age, and we see the beginning of the career of the greatest Indian fighter America has produced. For a full quarter of a century he became a prominent actor in the battles of his

country. His name will forever be remembered in connection with Tippecanoe, Fort Meigs, and the Thames. When he retired from military service, the Vice-President said, "He had never suffered defeat." Upon capturing the British army of Proctor, in Canada, he was called "The Washington of the West."

In after years he devoted himself to the cultivation of his farm, at North Bend, Indiana. Here he lived in plain style. His farm contained superior corn ground.

Some years before, when corn was low, he had established a distillery, converting his crop of corn into something more profitable. But when he perceived how injurious were its effects, he abolished it; setting forth a bright example to those about him, gladly sacrificing his pecuniary interests to the good of the community. In a public address he said, "I speak more freely of the practice of converting the material of the staff of life into an article which is so destructive to health and happiness, because in that way I have sinned myself; but in that way I shall sin no more."

After retiring from military service, General Harrison became interested in politics, and served in both Houses of Congress. On December the fourth, 1839, he was nominated by the Whigs for President, and was elected, and inaugurated March the fourth, 1841.

We have mentioned the eminent piety of his



## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

mother. From his father he inherited a keen intellect, and from his mother purity of heart, and from both a lofty, ennobling principle. These salutary influences controlled all his public and private deportment. He exhibited throughout his life an example that characterizes the best that is to be found in an American citizen. That William Henry Harrison was deeply religious, admits of no doubt. He strictly observed the Holy Sabbath; he attended church services regularly; he was liberal in his support of the church. The first Episcopal Church in the Ohio valley was established at Cincinnati, and this church he helped organize. Notwithstanding his preference for the Episcopal Church, and his friendly relations with the clergy and people, he never identified himself with the church as a communicant. In his last day he deeply regretted this, as others have done. The day after he entered the White House, he walked out into the city and purchased a Bible and a hymn-book. Daily these books were read. His purpose was to publicly unite with the church at the ensuing Easter service, but when that Sabbath came, his soul had gone home to be with God.

Is not the mother largely the making of the man? President Harrison was trained the way he should go, by the example and instruction of a maternal love. True, he lost his mother when he was but nineteen, but she had done her work so well that her influence never left him. When on his way to be



*Elizabeth Bassett — Harrison*

inaugurated President of the United States he visited his old home at Berkeley, Virginia. At night he occupied his mother's apartment — the one in which he had been born. What lured the old warrior to this sacred place? He pointed out to friends the closet where his mother would retire for private devotion, and though now nearly seventy, he had not forgotten the corner of the room where his mother sat by the table to read the Bible, and where, nursing his little hands in hers, she had taught him on his knees to pray,

“ Our Father who art in Heaven,”

Hallowed scene! Can American history produce anything more touching? Behold the soldier, the hero of many a battle-field, now exalted by the free gift of an American people to the high office of President of the United States — behold this man, withdrawing from the marts of commerce, from the applause of the people who loved him, to the home of his boyhood, living over again the scenes of a happy, joyous childhood, spent in the companionship of the mother who had vanished from sight now full fifty years! Was that sainted mother's spirit nigh? Did he come again under her influence? Who shall say nay! Under such an influence he penned his inaugural address! He penned those lofty sentences shortly to be given to the world, to present and to all future time. The world would soon know that he still remembered, still loved,

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

still cherished, the religious faith, which in childhood his mother had securely implanted in his soul. With sacred memories clustering around him he writes; he expresses his profound reverence for the Christian religion, and his thorough conviction that sound morals, religious belief, and a just sense of religious responsibility are essentially connected with all true and lasting happiness. Leaving behind that sacred atmosphere, he hastens on to Washington. He takes the oath of office, and becomes the people's President. But the work of the tired old soldier is nearly done. Only a month in office, and William Henry Harrison responds to the last roll-call, and he was laid to rest at North Bend, Indiana.

“ No marble rears its head to mark  
The honored hero's dust,  
Nor glittering spire, nor cenotaph,  
Nor monumental bust;  
But on the spot his manhood loved  
His aged form's at rest,  
And he built his own proud monument  
Within a nation's breast.”

## MARY ARMISTEAD — TYLER

JOHN TYLER

*Tenth President of the United States, 1841 — April  
the Fourth, 1845*

**J**OHN TYLER was named after his father, his grandfather also having the same name. Ancestry and home environment were again of the highest order. Patriotism was not lacking in the hearts of those fine old Virginians, and the state was fortunate in having a fine old college which had served the country well in training the minds of young men and preparing them to occupy important positions in life. The young men of the old Dominion State were of a high standard of intelligence and honesty. They were of a decidedly thoughtful turn of mind, and in early life success came to them. They interested themselves in public affairs,—many could scarcely wait until they had reached their majority,—so anxious to cast their first ballot. But in this day too often we meet with the reverse. Many young men, reaching twenty-one, are not enough interested in public affairs to register as qualified voters.

John Tyler's father was a man of large landed interests, and of commanding influence as a lawyer.

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

He was the personal friend of Patrick Henry and George Washington. He had served his state in a public way for a period of forty years. Judge Spencer Roam declared that "a purer patriot and a more honest man never breathed the breath of life."

This country has been particularly favored in the quality of her American homes. There has been a deal of plain living and high thinking. Mothers have done much to bring this to pass. In the home they have reigned as queen. Here, they have given of their best. Sons have shone because mother's light in the home has never grown dim. We are hearing much today of the decadence of the home; there is much lightness and frivolity. America will fail to produce the type of virile young men she has produced in the past when the influence of the home dies out.

In 1776, Judge Tyler married Miss Mary Armistead, a beautiful, cultured maiden of sixteen. She became the mother of seven children. In 1790, the second son was born and named John. He was born at Greenway, Charles City County, Virginia. Mary Armistead, his mother, was the only child of Robert Booth Armistead, of York County, Virginia, and was a descendant of the immigrant, William Armistead, who came to Virginia from Kirk Deighton, Yorkshire, England. The Armistead family was also the progenitor of William Henry Harrison. Thus the two Whig candidates of 1839, William

## *Mary Armistead — Tyler*

Henry Harrison and John Tyler, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too," were blood relatives from a common blood Armistead ancestry. When the marked success that came to John Tyler in after years, is attributed largely to the prominence of the Tyler family, and the influence of his father, particularly as a prominent lawyer and politician, we must not forget the influence of the Armistead family. If John Tyler was patriotic, the mother was equally so. If John Tyler had fine family connections, Mary Armistead could boast as well. John, Junior, was only six years old when Washington bade farewell to his army. From childhood he had received such a course of home training as would develop the finest patriotic impulses. He was exceedingly fond of books, and had an exceptionally fine memory. Graduating from William and Mary College at seventeen, he began the study of law in his father's office. That profession in his day had become a popular profession, in marked contrast to its unpopularity in the day of John Adams. Tyler also studied law in the office of Edmund Randolph, one of the most noted lawyers of the period, and at nineteen he hung out his own shingle, and began to practice at the Bar. He was kept busy from the start. Lawyers, three times his years, had all they could do to hold their own against him. When but twenty, he was offered a seat in the Legislature, but declined. The next year, however, he was elected, and began his brilliant political career, which cul-

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

minated in his assuming the Presidency, upon the death of President Harrison, April 4, 1841.

John Tyler's mother, Mary Armistead, died when she was only thirty-six. Judge Tyler never married again. He was deeply devoted to his wife, and she had been a good wife and mother. Before they were married he had sung her praises in verse, for he was a poet of real merit, and after her death he continued to do so. John Tyler, though but a lad when that good mother died, never forgot her. His recollections of her were abiding. Her influence stayed by him throughout the years. She continued to live in the mind of the boy, because of the fond devotion of his father, who never ceased to sing her praises. She was a Christian, a member of the Episcopal Church, and John Tyler also united with the church with which his sainted mother had been connected.

While serving as President of the United States, he was invited to deliver an address before the two literary societies of Randolph-Macon College. Critics have considered this address the most brilliant and able he ever delivered. In the closing words, he furnishes another example of a President of the United States paying a glowing tribute to the memory of mother. No man ever excelled John Tyler in words more tender, more beautiful, or more expressive, than those employed in this tribute. Back of the words we see the mind of the brilliant statesman, affected, as he recalls in fondest thought



*Mary Armistead — Tyler*

the mother he had lost in childhood. May this tribute, now resurrected from oblivion, long live to bless the memory of the mothers of our land.

“ What on earth can be more interesting than the *mother*? How many recollections and ideas crowd upon the mind at the repetition of that single word — our *Mother*? She who nurtured us in our infancy; watched our cradle; taught us to raise our little hands in prayer; followed us in our infantile rambles; and reared us to manhood in the love and practice of virtue, — such a mother is of priceless value. No loud-toned trumpet sounds forth her praise; she drags at her chariot wheels no visible captives made in war; but her path is strewn with flowers, and the virtues attend her footsteps; all Elysium reigns around her, and countless blessings are hers. God will bless her and man adore her.”

## JANE KNOX — POLK

JAMES KNOX POLK

*Eleventh President of the United States, 1845-1849*

ON May the twentieth, 1775, more than twelve months before the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress, the assembled inhabitants of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, publicly absolved themselves from their allegiance to the British crown, and issued a formal manifesto of Independence in terms of great eloquence. These brave people faced the scaffold and the fire. The great-uncle of James K. Polk, who was one of the signers of this Declaration of Independence, was one of the prime movers in this act of noble daring, and the paper was read by him before a great multitude of people. In the Revolutionary War several of the forebears of Mr. Polk, distinguished themselves. James K. Polk comes from an ancestry not lacking in patriotism.

Samuel Polk was a farmer of unassuming ways. In early life he was thrown upon his own resources and became the architect of his own fame and fortune. In 1794, he married Miss Jane Knox, of Scotch descent, and American patriotism and Scottish creed joined hands. Jane Knox did not

## *Jane Knox — Polk*

lack in a patriotic ancestry; her father, Captain James Knox, fought for the cause of the American Colonists in the American Revolution. On November the second, 1795, an important event occurred in the unpretentious farmhouse of Samuel Polk in Mecklenburg County; the young Scottish mother had given birth to a son, and he received the name of James Knox for her father.

James's mother was a most excellent woman, and in this he was fortunate, as many other men of note have been. She was distinguished for her vigorous intellect, strength of character, strict morals, and eminent piety. The shining virtues of the Scotch people shone forth resplendently in her exemplary life. She was a model mother and trained her family of ten children in such a way as to reflect credit upon their mother.

James was a delicate child, and besides he had a physical affliction which was eventually removed by a surgical operation. But his father observed he would not do for a farmer, a hunter, and least of all qualified for a soldier. So his father decided on a business career for him, and actually placed him in a country store. But James felt that this was not the right path for him to tread. He aspired to have an education, but how could he obtain it? It seemed like asking too much of his parents, for their hands were more than filled in providing properly for the demands of the large growing family; and then James was the eldest, and should he not now turn

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

in and help his parents? Should he be to them an added burden? But in response to his earnest entreaties his father took him from the store, for he had already observed the latent possibilities wrapped up in his son. When eighteen, he was given a certain amount of private tutoring, but he also became familiar with the difficult and tedious process of self-education. By means of self-help and such added help as he had secured from his teachers, he was ready to enter the Sophomore class of the University of North Carolina. While in college he began to reflect not only his Scotch maternal ancestry, but also the fine result of his mother's systematic training. His habits were exemplary. He had no time to waste. He was punctual to the extreme, to such an extent that his iron-clad habits of punctuality became a sort of standing joke among the students. In three years he received his diploma, graduating with first honors.

He began to study law in the office of Felix Grundy, and while here he lived in the political home of Andrew Jackson. General Jackson's father and mother were of Scotch-Irish descent, and so were the parents of Jane Knox. Jackson became an ardent admirer of young Polk.

In 1823, when Mr. Polk was twenty-eight years of age, he was elected to the Legislature. His progress from now on was rapid. At thirty in Congress, where he served continuously for fourteen years, in 1839, he was elected the Governor of Ten-

## *Jane Knox — Polk*

nessee, and in 1845 he became the President of the United States, defeating that fine and polished statesman, Henry Clay.

While occupying the presidential chair, his mother's influence continued to be reflected in his life. Her training had not been in vain. He absolutely refused to perform any official duties on the holy Sabbath; neither would he meet with any committees on that day. His manner of life had been to attend regularly divine service on the Lord's day, and he continued to maintain that habit. No one ever questioned the private morals or the integrity of James K. Polk, and while his plain, hard-working father had been dead nigh twenty years before Presidential honors came to his son, his proud mother lived to notice and enjoy.

President Polk was in his fifty-fourth year when his brilliant career lay behind him. He refused the proffer of a second nomination. He appeared to be in good health, and showed no evidence of age except his flowing gray hair. His manner was gracious and kindly. He spent his last day in office as President by attending service in the First Presbyterian Church in Washington. He began his duties as President by taking a solemn oath in the name of his Maker; he closes it by remembering Him in His holy temple. As he departed from the services, leaving the seat he had so long and so regularly occupied, he shook hands cordially with those he had been accustomed to worship with. To an

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

elder of the church, calling him by name, he said, "I shall never worship with you again," a prediction sadly fulfilled. He retired to his home at Nashville, and lived only three months. Though not a professing Christian, he loved, revered and honored the Christian Church.

President Polk's mother was a Presbyterian. He was reared in that faith, and that was the church of his choice. On his death-bed, he expressed a desire to be baptized. A clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church was called in, and from his hands he received the holy rite of baptism. His mother, whose influence had been so abiding throughout his career, was present during his last illness. She had been a witness to his early struggles; she had seen his rapid progress toward distinction with such pride as a fond mother's heart would know; she had lived to gaze on the bright meridian of all his public honors, and now that son, the object of her undying affection, was prematurely cut down. But the fond mother who had taught her boy to kneel at her knee and repeat the prayer of childhood days, who had prayed for him as only a mother knows how during the years of his struggles, and who had rejoiced when victories had come, was now to add grace, beauty and pathos to the scene, where lay her son, with his face turned toward the eternal day. Her prayers and tears commingled. What scene more affecting! A son,—born of plain parents, having a noble soul and strong mind, struggling for an educa-



*Jane Knox — Polk*

tion, with a physical handicap, honored again and again by his countrymen, and crowned with Presidential honors at forty-nine,—and now at fifty-four calmly folding his tent, his life's work done,—and a faithful gray-haired mother holding his hand and praying! Amidst such sanctifying influences, James Knox Polk sank slowly to rest, strengthened by the consolations of our holy religion and the prayers of a faithful mother!

## SARAH STROTHER — TAYLOR

ZACHARY TAYLOR

*Twelfth President of the United States, 1849-1850,  
July the Ninth*

THE blood of a fine ancestry has flowed through the veins of our Presidents. To be well born should be the undoubted right of every child of humanity. Zachary Taylor owed much to his ancestry. That he was a brave, heroic, courageous soldier is not to be wondered at, honored as he was with father and mother of such heroic mould. Mr. Taylor's family belonged to the aristocracy of the old Dominion. His family was allied with the families of Marshall, Lee, Monroe and Madison. His father is known to history as Colonel Richard Taylor. He was numbered among the hardy patriots who rowed across the Delaware at night, through floating ice, to help George Washington win the Christmas battle of Trenton, and in that battle Colonel Taylor fought side by side with Lieutenant Monroe, afterwards President of the United States. So Zachary Taylor not only had the best of blue blood of the old Dominion State flowing through his veins, but also the fighting blood of a fine old Revolutionary hero. Physiologists tell us that the

## *Sarah Strother — Taylor*

prevailing state of mind in a woman at certain periods exerts a controlling influence in determining the future character of the unborn. Many anecdotes are told of the prowess of the father of Zachary Taylor in his desperate encounters with the Indians — and his military career in the War of the Revolution is a matter of record. It must, therefore, naturally be inferred that the mind of the mother at the time was more than ordinarily wrought upon in listening to the recital of the heroic deeds of her husband.

Richard Taylor was thirty-five years of age before he married, and, as with most bachelors advancing in years, he was captivated by a very young lady. On August the twentieth, 1779, he wedded his charming captor — Miss Sarah Strother, then but nineteen years of age. Miss Strother came of an excellent family. They began housekeeping on a plantation in Orange County, Virginia. She gave birth to eight children, five sons and three daughters, Zachary was the third child born. His birth occurred November the twenty-third, 1784. The following summer, when he was but a baby six or seven months old, his father emigrated to Kentucky, which was called the “dark and bloody ground.” This is the interpretation of the Indian word “Kentucky,” and the name was not amiss when we consider the bloody deeds of the savages on the virgin soil of that state. Colonel Taylor took his family to a new log-house on lands he had recently

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

acquired; so while Zachary Taylor was not born in a log-house, he merely escaped it by a few months. The dark cloud of peril all the while hung over the log-cabin home. Every settler was expected to know how to use his rifle, and every log-cabin was a sort of fort, and every woman was part of the garri-son within. Those were days of thrilling adventure, and hairbreadth escapes. Colonel Taylor's brother, Hancock, had preceded him to this unsettled country, where but ten years before the first house of a white man had been built, and Hancock had fallen a victim to the savagery of the Indians.

Sarah Strother Taylor, the young wife, was only twenty-four when her husband took her to this wild abode — a section of the country that would try the souls of the strongest of men. But she was equal to the occasion. She had a strong character, was possessed of a lofty spirit, had many personal charms, and a cultivated mind. This young matron would have graced any home, and would have acquitted herself with credit in any circle. She possessed every shining virtue that can adorn woman in her parental relation. She was a past master in the art of knowing how to make a happy home for her husband and children under most unfavorable conditions. What were the nursery tales this mother related to her wondering boy? Tales of heroism; stories about American patriots. She instilled in the youthful mind of her son such lessons of Christian virtue which she herself practiced, for

## *Sarah Strother — Taylor*

Mother Taylor was an exemplary Christian. During the long winter evenings, when doors were barricaded, and a loaded rifle stood ready for use to repel any *midnight* attack that might be made by prowling Indians, the father would relate to his sons and daughters, the stories of the Revolution.

Young Zachary was brought up on his father's farm. Here he was compelled to work early and late. Satan finds plenty of work for idle hands to do, but in the Taylor home there was no chance for him to get in his innings; ten hungry mouths were to be provided for.

The father was interested in the education of his children. He first employed a private tutor for young Zachary, and he began his studies when only six years old. Later he attended such schools as the country afforded, and secured the rudiments of an education; nothing, however, but the English branches was taught.

At that time no one was more greatly exposed to danger from prowling Indians than the wives and mothers who remained at home while the men and the boys were absent. The men must be out on the farm, in the forest, felling the trees, or in the nearest town, buying and selling. What heroines these women were! What a brave, courageous woman Mother Taylor must have been! She kept up her fortitude without faltering.

What must have been the thoughts of this young mother as she bade her son good-bye after break-

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

fast, and saw him leave his home afoot or on a pony, going to the nearest school. Round about that very schoolhouse a number of Indians were known to have been, and on one occasion one of the savages had been shot down, wearing a British uniform. Imagine the anxiety of this good mother all the day while her boy was absent! Would he return at night? We see her at the window with anxious face, watching for his return. We see her watching a neighbor who was teaching his boys how to trail Indians, and how to save themselves if attacked by more than one warrior at a time. We need but few incidents to tell us how such home influences would react upon the mind and heart of a strong, brave lad. How such a boy as Zachary Taylor would reverence and love such a strong, brave, fearless mother. She would be to him a heroine, indeed. He could never shake off such an influence. A mother who faced danger, risked all, for her family, and be happy in it all. The farmer boy felt his heart stirred more times than can be told by what he saw and heard. He longed for a military career, but he remained on his father's farm, quietly doing his part, all the while under the influence of his brave Christian mother. His character was being fixed.

In 1808, his elder brother, serving as lieutenant in the army, having died, young Taylor was appointed by President Jefferson to fill the vacancy. Upon receiving his commission, he went at once to Washington. The young backwoodsman was unac-



*Sarah Strother — Taylor*

quainted with court etiquette, and he made his way directly to the White House, to thank, personally, President Jefferson for his commission. His entrance was effected, as it were, by force, as the latch-string "was not out." Loud and repeated rappings at last brought the servant to the door, who inquired vigorously why he had not rung the bell. But young Taylor was not accustomed to that form of civilization. Who would have thought that this unsophisticated young man, who approaches the door of the White House in such a manner as to be rebuked by the servant, was to have the gates of that same Executive Mansion open to receive him as its chosen and legitimate occupant, honored with the highest office in the gift of the American people!

Now began a remarkable military career that extended through a period of forty years. He fought through the War of 1812, and at its close had the rank of major. In the Black Hawk War, he was commissioned a colonel. In 1836, he was made a brigadier-general. When war broke out with Mexico, General Taylor was one of the most seasoned of military men in the army. His military career in Mexico was brilliant. He disapproved of the war with Mexico, and did not favor the annexation of Texas, but when hostilities began he fought with all the vigor and valor he possessed, because he was part of the American Army. To quote his words, — "For nearly forty years, I have eaten of the bread of this country, and I had felt something rise within

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

me, forbidding me to abandon that country and desert her service at the moment that she called me to a difficult and dangerous duty." He is one of the very few generals to receive from Congress the full rank of General of the Army. The Duke of Wellington declared, "General Taylor is a General, indeed." For forty years, as he himself declared, he had been engaged in the military service of his country, and during that period he had never voted. He was popularly called "Old Rough and Ready," and this name clung to him as did that of "Old Hickory" to General Jackson. This "ignorant frontier fighter" was nominated for President of the United States over such distinguished statesmen and orators as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. He defeated at the presidential election, General Cass, Martin Van Buren, and Charles Francis Adams. He was unaccustomed to the turmoil of politics, and the good-natured old soldier did not live long to enjoy the honors the citizens of the great Republic had bestowed upon him. He died July the ninth, 1850, sixteen months after his inauguration. He was ill but from the evening of July the fourth. He faced the King of Terrors as bravely as he had faced the enemy on many a hard-fought battle-field. He was the same brave old hero. Prayer was offered in the sick chamber, and in the secret communion of his heart with God, who shall say he did not die as a Christian. His last words were, "I am about to die — I expect the summons soon — I have en-

*Sarah Strother — Taylor*

deavored to discharge all my official duties faithfully — I regret nothing, but I am sorry that I am about to leave my friends.” His daughter has said, “ My father, while not a professing Christian, had the greatest respect for true piety, and was honorable, straightforward and conscientious in all his dealings. He was a constant reader of the Bible, and practiced all its precepts, acknowledging his responsibility to God.” A chaplain in the army during the Mexican war said, “ General Taylor is the decided friend of Christianity. He was a regular attendant on public worship in the garrison, accompanied by his accomplished lady and daughter.”

He who reads these words cannot but feel that the influence of his devout and faithful mother had not been in vain.

“ Rest, wearied soldier, rest — thy work is done,—  
Thy last great battle fought — the victory won,—  
And where thy Country’s Genius vigil keeps,  
Around thine honored grave, a nation weeps.”

## PHEBE MILLARD — FILLMORE

### MILLARD FILLMORE

*Thirteenth President of the United States, July the Ninth, 1850-1853*

**M**ILLARD FILLMORE came of good old English stock. His father, Lieutenant Nathaniel Fillmore, settled in Bennington, Vermont, and was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Millard Fillmore's father, also named Nathaniel, was born at Bennington. When twenty-one years of age he left home and started for what was then considered the "far West," which was in about 1795, and settled at a point now called Summer Hill, Cayuga County, New York. We smile as we think of that as the "far West." His farm was located in a primeval forest, none of it under cultivation. He at once began cutting down the fine old trees, and on the clearing built a rude, crude log-cabin. Millard Fillmore's ancestors for three generations back were pioneers in the forest. "The noble oak which stands erect, and defies the tornado, is nurtured by no hot-house culture, but is slowly elaborated by centuries of exposure, its fibres becoming tough and firm by long resistance to the rocking of rude storms. So with a national character that has the elements of bold enterprise and of

## *Phebe Millard — Fillmore*

enduring greatness. It is formed and consolidated by long struggle with hardship and difficulty. The sturdy stroke of the pioneer's axe not only felled the forest, but formed his own character." The ancestors of Millard Fillmore performed their full share of this peculiar American labor, and transmitted from generation to generation firmness and self-reliance, which finally came to full fruition in Millard Fillmore, the thirteenth President of the United States.

After Nathaniel Fillmore had built his log-cabin, and had probably raised his first crop, he returned to Bennington, related his thrilling adventures to his neighbors, and claimed as his bride Miss Phebe Millard, the daughter of Doctor Abiathar Millard, a practicing physician of Bennington. When he returned, he took his young bride with him to share his log-cabin home. The cabin was naked, rude and lonely. Neighbors were few, and the few that were, were a long distance away. By night the wolves would howl, by day the loneliness was oppressive.

When Nathaniel married Phebe Millard, he was twenty-six, while his bride was only sixteen, but although so young, she evinced a judgment in domestic affairs that would have done credit to one of more mature years. She cheerfully performed the duties and responsibilities of a pioneer's wife. To her husband she was deeply attached, and a full share of credit is due her for the success that in after

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

life crowned his labors. She became the mother of nine children, Millard being the second born. At the time of his birth, his father walked seven miles through the forest, with snow half knee-deep and wolves howling on either side, to procure the services of a physician. When he returned in haste to say that the physician would soon be there, he found the baby rocking in a sap-trough for want of a better cradle; this was in the heart of the winter, January the seventh, 1800.

Nathaniel Fillmore had a very limited education, but he was a prodigious reader. He read every book and paper he could get hold of, and consequently became one of the best-informed men of his day. He loved particularly to talk politics, religion and farming. His young wife was favored with a more liberal education. Her father, a prominent physician of Bennington, was devoted to his children, and gave them the best schooling the community afforded. The mother of Millard was no doubt the superior to her husband in many ways. The social circle in which she moved differed from his. She was better educated, more cultured and refined. Millard Fillmore is no exception to the rule, that distinguished men have usually had superior mothers. In personal appearance she has been described as very prepossessing, and was richly endowed with the amiable qualities of soul for which the New England ladies were proverbial. That she found plenty of hard work to do admits of no doubt.



*Phebe Millard — Fillmore*

That she had many a thrilling adventure in her log-cabin home is quite believable. She was modest and uncomplaining, and lavished upon her children all her heart's affection and painstaking care. She instilled into their young hearts the value of virtuous living, which never left them. How much Phebe Millard Fillmore influenced her son in righteous living the world will never know. Both parents had the highest regard for virtuous living. The father loved to say that he had the shortest creed in christendom — two words, "Do Right." So the son inherited from both father and mother his high regard for righteousness.

Nathaniel Fillmore was a domestic man. No joys exceeded those of the home circle. He was overjoyed in seeing the lavish devotion his wife paid her children. She tried to make every member of the home circle happy, and she never failed. She was the delight of the home. One of her choice books was the Bible. She reared her son in the fear of the Lord, and opened up to his mind the treasures to be found in the Holy Scriptures. This wisdom, thus secured, he never lost. His mother's piety influenced him throughout his entire public career. Upon assuming the high office of President of the United States, he spoke of his dependence upon God, and with all his heart sought His guidance. This rare mother was fairly venerated by her children; and although she never lived to witness the high honors that came to her distinguished son,

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Millard Fillmore could never mention her name without evident emotion.

Millard Fillmore's educational advantages were very meagre. The New England schools followed closely the New England emigrant, but Millard's schooling was very scant. He was nature's student, and nature's schooling, with an abundant supply of sound common sense, served him well. As a boy he attended the sessions of the little red country school-house, and mastered the rudiments of an education. In the spring and fall, he had to assist his father on the farm. There was no wealth of reading matter then, such as now, in the shape of fine magazines, the daily press, and the public library, — but he managed to get books, and these he read and re-read until he had mastered their contents.

One day when the lad was intent on his book, his father, noticing his close application to his reading, said to Millard's mother, "Wife, who knows but Millard may some day be President."

As a boy he cared but little for amusements or sports, which were a source of enjoyment to the boys of the neighborhood. As a lad, he was serious-minded, and seemed to have no time to waste on boyish pranks and games. In childhood, he loved his parents with all the ardor of his soul, and loved to render implicit obedience to their commands. Even in childhood he knew no such thing as failure. He was never known to quarrel with other boys, but often served as peacemaker. He used neither pro-

fane nor obscene speech. When intemperance was destroying many brilliant young men of his day, young Fillmore remained strictly temperate. In all this, we surely see the motherly influence of Phebe Fillmore.

Mr. Fillmore's parents were poor, but strictly honest. The farm was so poor that the father was unable to keep all the family together; when Millard was but fourteen he had to leave home and shift for himself. It must have been a trying ordeal for the young lad. One whose mind naturally thirsted for knowledge, who was so fond of books,— to be compelled to turn aside from the schoolroom, with such a seeming lack of preparation for a successful life-work, at a time when other more fortunate sons were preparing to enter college. But we fail to find that young Millard registered one word of complaint. He left his mother's side, and the poor old farm, to learn the drapery trade, but soon afterward he was bound out as an apprentice for four years to learn the trade of a wool-carder. During such hours as he was free, he devoted his time to study. When in his nineteenth year he made the acquaintance of a friend named Judge Walter Wood. Judge Wood was deeply impressed with the appearance of the young man. He invited him to his home, discovered the breadth of his information, and the rich qualities of his mind. He advised him to give up the business of clothier, for which he had qualified himself by four long years of apprenticeship, and take up the

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study of law. The youth told him he had no money, and but little education other than that which he had given himself. The Judge told him he need not worry about that, for he would take him into his own office, and loan him such money as he might require while pursuing his studies. What a mine young Fillmore had struck in the discovery of this friend! What a rare jewel Judge Wood had found in the discovery of this young man of such unusual ability!

Part of the time while he was pursuing his studies, he taught school, so as to be compelled to accept the least possible assistance financially from his friend. He had the highest sense of honor, and this he carried throughout his entire political career. In four years more, he was admitted to the bar. He had spent eight years in great patience, in preparing for his life's work. Four years he was bound out as an apprentice,—no evidence of faultfinding, no complaint registered of his being out of sympathy with the hard terms of his bargain. Then followed four years of study in the law office, combined with self-help as a teacher. When twenty-nine his political career began, serving as a member of the Legislature of the state of New York, and this career culminated by being elected Vice-President of the United States with Zachary Taylor as President, and when President Taylor died he assumed the office of President.

When Millard Fillmore was President, his aged

father visited him at the White House. Nathaniel Fillmore was then over eighty. During that visit the President gave an official reception, and for the first time, on an occasion of this kind, the father of a President of the United States stood proudly by the side of his distinguished son. A minister was present who had accompanied the elder Fillmore to Washington, and had heard the father relate the story of the birth of his son, and how the baby had been placed in a sap-trough. When he saw the proud bearing of the President's father, and the distinguished son, equally proud of his father, he remarked, "Was there ever since the world began such a contrast as that group affords — and the baby in the sap-trough!" It was truly a lesson in contrasts, and in no other country would it be possible. In the one scene we see the father, poor, hurrying on foot through a forest road, snow half knee-deep, wolves howling on either side, seven miles away, for a physician. In a log-cabin, a young mother, alone; in a sap-trough a babe! The other scene — in the White House, brilliant company, representatives of foreign countries present, but the central group the President's family; the father, venerable, tall, not much bowed down by his eighty years; for a crown, a shock of gray hair adorning an intelligent face, the cynosure of all; the President, handsome, of fine presence, and in the prime of life! No such contrast could be found in any other country!



## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

Millard Fillmore! There may have been greater Presidents who have sat in the White House, but no man more honest ever sat there. When he left office his hands were clean. He had tried and had not failed to live up to the creed of his father, "Do Right"; and there stood by him the excellent maxims taught him by his mother. We see the modesty of the mother reflected in the son when he modestly declined the degree of Doctor of Civil Laws, offered him by Oxford University, while making an European trip, after he had finished his term as President. He had never enjoyed University privileges, and would not accept University honors when the compliment meant more to the office he had filled than to himself.

It has been stated that through the statesmanship of Millard Fillmore the blow was warded off that was sure to come between the slave-holding states and those anti-slavery. Interference at that time might have spelled disaster, when Congress was fiercely angered and the public mind furiously agitated. This man, so modest, so obscured by greater Presidents, unknown save by his name by few Americans — this man might have been the providential man in the right place. John Quincy Adams has declared that "he was one of the most fair-minded and faithful of men with whom he had served in public life."



## ANNA KENDRICK — PIERCE

FRANKLIN PIERCE

*Fourteenth President of the United States, 1853-1857*

IT would seem that the stormy days of the Revolution, when patriotism was pitched to its highest key, had something to do with the making of men destined to become President of the United States. Nearly all of the early Presidents either had parents who took part in the freeing of America or they had a large share in it themselves, either on the field of battle or in the Senate chamber, where the flood-tides of patriotism oftentimes reached a high level. There were battles to be fought by high-minded statesmen, with straight thinking, just as truly in the Senate chamber as on the battlefield. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson did their part as nobly here as George Washington and others did on the field of battle. There was honor and glory enough for all.

Benjamin Pierce, the father of Franklin Pierce, was a mere youth of seventeen, at work in the plow-field, when tidings reached him that the Colonists had shed their blood at Lexington and Concord. He unhitched his oxen, left the plow in the furrow and started for the house. He took his uncle's gun

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and equipment and immediately set forth, having bid his parents an affectionate farewell. From that day and for more than seven years he never saw his native town. He served throughout the entire Revolutionary War, and was with Washington's troops when he said farewell to his army. He was mustered out of service with the rank of captain. The Pierces were descended from liberty-loving English people.

At the close of the war, Captain Pierce bought a farm of one hundred and fifty acres located among the forests of New Hampshire, in what is now Hillsborough. For this farm he paid one hundred and fifty dollars, or one dollar per acre. In 1786, he built a log-house in the clearing, and the following year, 1787, he married Miss Elizabeth Andrews, and by her had one child, a daughter. His wife lived only one year. In 1788, he married again; his bride was Miss Anna Kendrick, and on this farm Franklin Pierce was born the 22nd of November, 1804.

While Franklin was not born to wealth, yet in that frugal community his father was looked upon as a prosperous man. He was fairly well educated, enjoyed reading, and was a good public speaker. There was considerable of aristocratic pride among the New England farmers, and Benjamin Pierce belonged to that aristocracy, having fought in the Revolutionary War and having been a member of the Society of the Cincinnati. His children would at once be placed in a good circle of society. For

## *Anna Kendrick — Pierce*

an entire generation he was looked upon as the most influential man in New Hampshire, and was one of the best-known governors the state ever had.

Anna Kendrick Pierce was light-hearted and gay. If ever a son inherited from his mother peculiar traits of character, surely that son was Franklin Pierce. His mother was fond of having a good time. Cares she carried lightly. In a company of people she would always be the chief object of attention and of attraction. Others naturally gravitated about her; not because of any social distinction or excellence, but because she was the light and soul of the circle. She even bordered on the eccentric. She seemed to take delight in attracting the attention of others by some freakish innovation in the manner of her dress. She was plump and pretty, and was known to appear at a church service garbed in a flashy short gown, displaying comely ankles, encircled with red ribbons. It has been stated that she was fond of strong drink and that at times she imbibed too freely.

Franklin inherited from his mother that same freedom-from-care disposition. He was gay, even hilarious, as a lad and young man. At home, with his farmer playmates, or at college among college students, he was a "real boy." He entered heartily into all sorts of sports and games, and was the life of any company. Franklin entered Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, in 1820. His fun-loving and fondness for sports came near sounding the death-

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knell to his academic career. Fond of society and always a favorite in social gatherings, books became to him of secondary interest. The first two years spent in college, he was inattentive to his studies to such a degree as to almost fail, but after that he pulled himself together and applied himself to his work, graduating with honors in 1824. Nathaniel Hawthorne was a student in the college in the class immediately below him. They became fast friends, and the Hawthorne biography of Franklin Pierce is considered authentic.

While Franklin Pierce's mother was gay, light-hearted and fond of company, these things did not prevent her from being intensely patriotic, and possibly in all New Hampshire there was no more patriotic man than Benjamin Pierce. So Franklin Pierce came by right of inheritance into possession of that patriotic zeal which characterized him even in his college days, for when a student he was the leader of a military company of college students.

After leaving college he began studying law, and was admitted to the Bar in 1827. He began his political career when he was twenty-six by being elected to the Legislature of his state. Afterward he served in the lower House of Congress, and later in the United States Senate, which seat he resigned in 1842. When war with Mexico was declared, Senator Pierce enlisted in the first quota of troops that left Concord, as a private. This was an occurrence almost unheard of; one who had served as

Congressman, United States Senator, and who had been offered the nomination of Governor of his state, enlisting as a private. President Polk soon commissioned him a colonel, and later brigadier-general. He led his brigade in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco, and although his military record has been severely criticised by many, Generals Scott and Pillow, his superior officers, have accorded him high praise.

General Pierce was elected President of the United States in November, 1852, defeating General Scott, under whom he had served in the Mexican War. He carried every state in the Union except four. He was inaugurated March the fourth, 1853. He seemingly could not get away from a fondness to attract attention to himself.

Vanity seemed a rather vulnerable point with him, but we have already shown that this was a striking characteristic of his mother. Unlike other Presidents who had preceded him, who had taken the oath of office by kissing the Holy Bible, he took the oath of office by affirmation, with his hand resting on the Bible. He also departed from the usual custom of his predecessors by delivering his inaugural address without manuscript, and in his address announced his firm belief that slavery was a constitutional right. He placed in his cabinet as Secretary of State, Jefferson Davis.

## ELIZABETH SPEER — BUCHANAN

JAMES BUCHANAN

*Fifteenth President of the United States, 1857-1861*

**J**AMES BUCHANAN, the father of the fifteenth President of the United States, was born in Ireland. He came to this country in 1783. His family was poor but respectable. On April the twenty-sixth, 1788, when twenty-seven years of age, he married an American girl, Miss Elizabeth Speer, daughter of James Speer. His bride was twenty-one. She gave birth to eleven children. James, Junior, was born in a log-cabin on what was called the Dunwoodie Farm, April the twenty-third, 1791. The trees out of which the cabin was built were felled by Mr. Buchanan's own hands; he likewise building the cabin himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan were both devout Christians of the Presbyterian faith. President Buchanan says of his father: "He was a man of great native force of character. He was not only respected but beloved by all who knew him. He was a kind father, a sincere friend, and an honest and religious man." James received a liberal education, graduating from Dickinson College in 1810, when nineteen years of age, and beginning at once to study law. In



## *Elizabeth Speer — Buchanan*

1814, after the capture of Washington by the British, he enlisted as a volunteer in the Army, and served until the war was over. He is the only man with a military career becoming President of the United States who did not receive a commission as an officer.

Horton, in his "Life of James Buchanan," says of Mrs. Buchanan, "Although she had not enjoyed the advantages of a superior education, she was distinguished for her masculine sense, and remarkable literary taste. She was also a woman of the most exalted and enlightened piety, and to her influence in forming his character and implanting those fundamental principles of conduct which underlie all true greatness, is her son, James Buchanan, indebted for his present distinction." That he was indebted to his mother for his rich intellectual gifts admits of no doubt. He was graduated from Dickinson with highest honors.

But James Buchanan's soul also responded to the influence of Christianity. He had a religious tendency of mind, which he largely inherited from his mother. An older brother was a distinguished rector of an Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. His correspondence is punctuated with not mere religious platitudes, but with that which shows a personal reach of the soul after God. He was baptized in infancy, brought up in the Presbyterian Church, and enjoyed a Christian home training of

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

the finest character. In speaking to a friend he referred, with moistened eyes and faltering voice, to the lessons instilled in him as a boy by his mother. She had taught him to pray, and her presence as an invisible ministering spirit seemed to hold him to his duty through the whole of his subsequent career. He read the Bible, and she had taught him to love that sacred book; he honored the Sabbath, and she had taught that by precept and example; he also had a daily habit of prayer, and obeyed the Scriptural injunction, "Enter into thy closet," and to her he was indebted for that habit. In 1860, while still in the chair as President, he had a long conversation with the Rev. Dr. Paxton on the subject of religion. They met privately at the request of the President. Mr. Buchanan stated that for several years he had been in the habit of reading the Bible daily, and of daily prayer. He asked, "What is a religious experience?" Dr. Paxton explained, using the Scriptures as the basis of his argument, and the experiences of the Christian to illustrate the subject. At the conclusion of the conference the President said, "Well, if what you say is correct I hope I am a Christian, for I have much of the experience you describe. My mind is made up. As soon as I retire from the Presidency, I shall unite with the Presbyterian Church." "Why not now?" said Dr. Paxton. "Should I do that now, people would shout 'Hypocrite' from Maine to Georgia." Though the confes-

*Elizabeth Speer — Buchanan*

sion is humiliating, there was more truth than fiction in what he said. Andrew Jackson held back for the same reason, declaring that his political opponents would say, "It was done for political effect." Immediately after Mr. Buchanan retired from the Presidency, he united with the Presbyterian Church at Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

His mother strongly objected to his serving as Minister to Russia. The place had been offered to him by President Jackson, and Mr. Buchanan had accepted the appointment. Mrs. Buchanan was sixty-five years of age, and in delicate health. She seemed to have a presentiment that should he go so far away from home she would never see him again. She wrote him the following touching letter:

OCTOBER 21, 1831.

*My dear Son:*

With Harriet's permission I write you a few lines in her letter. I feel deep solicitude respecting your mission to Russia, and perhaps I am too late in laying before you my objections, which in my estimation are formidable. Would it not be practicable even now, to decline its acceptance? Your political career has been of that description, which ought to gratify your ambition, and as to pecuniary matters, they are no object to you. If you can consistently, with the character of a gentleman, and a sense of honor, decline, how great a sense of satisfaction it would be to me. May the God of infinite goodness dispose of us in whatever way may pro-

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mote His glory, and secure our everlasting felicity,  
is the prayer of your,

Affectionate

MOTHER.

P. S. At what time do you intend paying us that visit previous to your departure from the country that gave you birth, and I expect, to me the last visit? Do not disappoint me but certainly come.

We do not know when Mr. Buchanan made that visit, but we know that one who was so devoted to his mother as he was would never leave America for far-away Russia without paying her the visit she so much yearned to have.

Her presentiment came true. Mr. Buchanan sailed from New York for Liverpool, April the eighth, 1832, and his mother passed away May the fourteenth, 1833. She never saw his face again, and the visit longed for was, as she felt it would be, to her, his last.

James Buchanan is another of our Presidents who has paid a beautiful and loving tribute to the memory of his mother. As one reads these beautiful lines, so expressive of admiration and love, he is reminded of the words of Holy Writ, "Her children rise up and call her blessed."

"My mother, considering her limited opportunities in early life, was a remarkable woman. The daughter of a country farmer, engaged in house-

*Elizabeth Speer — Buchanan*

hold employment from early life until after my father's death; she yet found time to read much, and to reflect deeply on what she read. She had a great fondness for poetry, and could repeat with ease all the passages in her favorite authors which struck her fancy. These were Milton, Young, Cowper and Thompson. I do not think, at least until a late period of life, she had ever read a criticism on any of these authors, and yet such was the correctness of her natural taste that she had selected for herself and could repeat every passage in them which had been admired.

“She was a sincere and devoted Christian from the time of my earliest recollection, and had read much on the subject of Theology, and what she read once she remembered forever. For her sons, as they successively grew up, she was a delightful and instructive companion. She would argue with them and often gain the victory; ridicule them in any folly, or eccentricity; excite their ambition by presenting to them in glowing colors men who had been useful to their country, or their kind, as objects of imitation, and enter into all joys and sorrows. Her early habits of laborious industry she could not be induced to forego while she had anything to do. My father did everything he could to prevent her from laboring in domestic concerns, but it was all in vain. I had often, during my vacations, at school or college, sat in the room with her, and while she was (entirely of her own choice) busily

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engaged in homely duties, have spent hours pleasantly and instructively, conversing with her.

“She was a woman of great firmness of character, and bore the afflictions of her later life with Christian philosophy. After my father’s death she lost two sons, William and George Washington, two young men of great promise, and also a favorite daughter. These afflictions withdrew her affections, gradually more and more, away from the things of this world, and she died on May the fourteenth, 1833, at Greensburg, in the calm and firm assurance that she was going home to her Father and God. It was chiefly to her influence that her sons were indebted for a liberal education. Under Providence, I attribute any little distinction which I may have acquired in the world to the blessing which he conferred upon me in granting me such a mother.”

Here was a mother whose time was not completely absorbed in mothers’ meetings, society clubs, and fashionable fandangoes. She took the time to be a companion to her children, as well as a consistent example in Christian discipleship. She was their counsellor and taught them the value of an upright life, and the privilege of having high and exalted aspirations in life. Any child would owe a world of debt to such a mother. WAS MOTHER BUCHANAN REPAYED?



## NANCY HANKS — LINCOLN

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Sixteenth President of the United States, 1861-1865*

EVERY high-school scholar is familiar with the name of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. She has been described as slender, delicate, rather pale and sad, of a shrinking nature, still, heroic. Miss Tarbell, in her "Life of Lincoln," says, "She was a sweet-tempered and beautiful woman, whom tradition paints as the center of all the country merry-making." The Hanks girls were also very religious, and were prominent at camp meetings, were fine singers, and occasionally indulged in a shout, according to the Methodist custom of those days. Carl Schurz is the only author we have come across who describes Mrs. Lincoln in an altogether different light. He paints her as coarse and ignorant, and with a melancholy disposition. Historically, we believe this to be incorrect, in view of the fact that historians, generally speaking, have agreed otherwise.

In a mere hut, on a poor scrub farm near Hodgenville, Larue County, Kentucky, February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born. His cradle, the only one he ever knew, was his mother's arms. His only

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playmate in his earliest childhood was his sister Nancy, who bore this name during the life of her mother, but after her death took the name of Sarah, after her step-mother. Lincoln's playground was the primeval forest about him. He never owned a toy, for toys were expensive and there was little money in the Lincoln home. When Lincoln was seven years old he and his little sister Nancy trudged behind their father and mother into the trackless wilds of Southern Indiana. Here, on Little Pigeon Creek, Thomas Lincoln established his new home. The land chosen was covered with dense forest, and no shelter awaited the family he brought with him, so he hastily cut down a lot of young saplings and constructed a shed, into which he moved his family. It shielded the family only on three sides, through the freezing storms of one long winter. It had no floor, no windows, and the ground floor turned into mud when the thaw set in. There was not even a skin to hang over the open front to keep out the storms. Pegs were driven in the wall, and young Lincoln nimbly climbed up these to his bed of leaves in the rude loft. Nancy Hanks could not withstand the rigors of the frontier life. Hardship, exposure, and anxiety had begun to tell on her. In the summer of 1818 malarial fever broke out in the neighborhood. Her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Sparrow, were both stricken with the disease. They were brought to the Lincoln shanty to be cared for. Nancy Hanks waited on them, and

## *Nancy Hanks — Lincoln*

attended also to the cares of her own household, pouring out her life and strength for others, as Elizabeth Hutchinson, the martyred mother of Andrew Jackson, had done. Both uncle and aunt died. The extra burdens had begun to tell on the already overburdened mother, and she too fell an easy victim to the fever. The nearest physician was thirty-five miles away. The swift fever soon burned out her life. As the end drew near, Abraham knelt sobbing beside his dying mother. He was losing his best friend. She laid her hand on his young head, and gave him her last message, calling upon him to be good to his father and sister, and calling upon all to be good to one another and to worship God.

It must have been a most remarkable and affecting death-bed scene. Impressions were made upon the mind of young Lincoln that were never effaced, and heartened him in after years for the strenuous tasks he was called upon to perform. Out of the sick chamber of Mrs. Lincoln have come certain incidents of compelling interest, revealing not only a mother's love, but her earnest desire that this son should be true to the highest ideals of life.

It has generally been supposed that at this time he promised his mother that he would never use intoxicating liquor, for he made this promise when he was nine years old, and that was his age when his mother died. He kept the promise he made her, to the day of his death. When he had grown

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

to manhood, during the course of an address, he read a pledge he had written:

*Whereas*, the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is productive of pauperism, degradation and crime; and believing it our duty to discourage that which produces more evil than good, we therefore pledge ourselves to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

Mr. Lincoln was always a firm exponent of total abstinence. The influence of Nancy Hanks, through the agency of a pledge exacted from her son when she was dying, continues to live through the channel of the Lincoln - Lee Temperance Legion.

Bishop Luther B. Wilson tells us that one day while the mother was lying critically ill, the barefoot boy was playing outside the cabin door, and her husband was seated by her bedside. The mother is saying that it seems to her that Abe's life is a reproduction of her own. "But, mother," said Abe's father, "He cannot sing as you can!" Possibly Thomas Lincoln then had a vision of Nancy Hanks, who when a comely country lass used her fine voice in church services, camp meetings and gatherings of homely country folk, and it may have been one of the attractions that drew Thomas Lincoln to her side as an ardent wooer. The dying mother seemed to have the face of her son before her as she made answer to her husband, and she seemed to be possessed of the spirit of prophecy as she looked out

into the future. "It may be that he cannot sing as I can sing, but it may be that he will make others sing." How grandly nature endowed him with the power to make others sing! He gave a new song of freedom to an entire human race! He inspired poets to sing of Liberty and Freedom as they never had before! Lincoln brought into the songs of the world a new major note that never before had been heard.

As the end drew near and her spirit struggled to break away and return to God who gave it, the dying mother pressed her son to her breast and bade him a long and loving farewell, saying: "Be something, Abe." Ever and anon during the years that were to come Lincoln heard the voice of his angel mother saying, "Be something, Abe." Throughout the years of his struggle and toil, and when honors at last came to him, the words of that angel mother from the courts of heaven would come to him, "Be something, Abe." The words remind us of the words of the mother of Horace Greeley, when young Greeley was leaving home to go out into the world for the first time, "Try and be somebody." Mr. Lincoln once said to an intimate friend, his eyes suffused with tears, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother — blessings on her memory." Strange that there have been those who said that Mr. Lincoln in these words referred to his step-mother, when his stepmother was still living when he gave expression to them.



## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

This boy, but nine years old when his mother slipped away to heaven, loved her with all the ardor of his soul. His father's knowledge of carpentry enabled him to make the pine box which was to contain the body of his mother. Young Abe stood by while this rude box was being nailed together. He stood by when his father lowered the rude casket into the grave, which he had made in an adjoining forest. There were no religious services connected with his mother's burial, and this almost broke young Lincoln's heart. An itinerant Methodist preacher named Parson Elkins had occasionally conducted religious services in the neighborhood. Lincoln secured his address, and the first letter he ever wrote was addressed to this minister, requesting him to come and hold religious services over that lonely grave. Receiving an affirmative answer, he sent invitations to the settlers, and fully two hundred came to the funeral from miles around. If Parson Elkins had known that that letter was written by a boy who was destined to become President of the United States, how carefully he would have preserved it! The funeral sermon of this humble Methodist preacher made a profound impression on Lincoln's mind, and was never effaced. The day to him was a holy day.

While Nancy Hanks could not be called an educated woman, even in those days, she was able to read, and often read to young Abe and his sister, the father sitting by, understanding and appreciating an



## *Nancy Hanks — Lincoln*

education all the more because he had it not. Much has been written about Mr. Lincoln's use of the Bible. To his mother he was indebted for his great love of the Holy Scriptures. His mother is reported to have said, "I would rather my son would be able to read the Bible than to own a farm, if he cannot have but one." Lincoln probably never owned a farm, and may never have had sufficient funds to purchase one, but he did know his Bible. The influence of the Holy Scriptures on Mr. Lincoln's life and his writings is remarkable. A recent writer says he has taken the pains to go through Mr. Lincoln's published works, speeches, letters and public papers, and had marked every reference to God, Providence, every Scriptural allusion or quotation, and in so doing was astonished at the result. Some pages were literally covered with pencilings. Raymond, in his "Life and Public Services of Abraham Lincoln," says that when his mother died, "she was happy in the knowledge that chiefly under her own tuition her son had learned to read the Bible, the book which as a Christian woman she prized above all others. It is impossible to estimate the influence which this faithful mother exerted in moulding the character of the child." The earnestness with which she impressed on his mind and heart the holy precepts of this book did most to develop those characteristics which in after years caused him to be known as "Honest old Abe."

Mr. Lincoln could never get entirely away from

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the influence of his mother's religious instruction. His experience, however, should teach us that one should have a care what he reads. Early in his life he read Paine's "Age of Reason," and to it he owed those frightful years of groping in the dark which never left him until, as he himself confessed, the overwhelming responsibility of the Civil War drove him to his knees. That he prayed, and prayed much, during those dark days, is a matter of record. No one has ever questioned the sincerity of his devotion to God, and his unwavering faith in prayer. His confession as to his personal attitude to religion was: "When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ." His attitude toward life in its larger significance, with its strikingly religious note, is revealed in this testimony: "I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me — and I think He has — I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know that I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it." How honestly and righteously the great commoner, Abraham Lincoln, earned the sobriquet, "Honest old Abe," which an admiring public applied to him! He had squared his life by

## *Nancy Hanks — Lincoln*

his mother's Bible, and to her he was indebted for his love for the book, and when men in after years learned to think of him as the "honest" man, an unconscious compliment was paid to his angel mother, Nancy Hanks.

No man ever sat in the President's chair who had such little actual school advantages as Mr. Lincoln, except Andrew Johnson, who never attended school a day in his life. Lincoln's actual schooling was of the most meagre kind. Before he was seven years old he walked eight miles a day to attend school, four miles each way. His mother died when he was nine. She had something of an education, and appreciated its worth. His father was illiterate. No doubt he inherited from his mother his intense thirst for knowledge. She knew the value of books, and started off that lad of tender years, two years before her death, to walk that long distance to the little country schoolhouse. His entire education covered about one year of actual school attendance at little district schools, and this year of attendance, scattered through several years, here a little and there a little, so as to be as little effective as possible. If Mr. Lincoln had said good-bye to books when he left the schoolroom behind him, the world would never have heard of him. His thirst for knowledge, inherited from his mother, his mother's dying words, "Be something, Abe," were the two compelling factors that wrought mightily in his future career. When twenty-one he began the study of English

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grammar. Think of one having such limited educational advantages, but in after years possessed of such graceful, polished speech as to cause a Professor of Rhetoric of Yale College to follow him around where he was scheduled to speak, in order to secure examples of perfect English rhetoric! Emerson, Lowell and Victor Hugo have included the famous Gettysburg address among the three masterpieces of literature, and Mr. Gladstone declared that the ideas it contained were loftier than any ever before uttered in the annals of the world.

Much of Mr. Lincoln's life was spent in the service of his country. He was soon recognized as a leader among his fellows. In 1832, when twenty-three years of age, he enlisted in a company of militia at Sangamon, and was by his comrades chosen captain, serving briefly in that capacity in the Black Hawk War. In 1834, when twenty-five, he was elected a member of the Illinois Legislature, serving in this capacity eight consecutive years. In 1847 he was elected a member of Congress. He was nominated to oppose the candidacy of Stephen A. Douglass for re-election to the United States Senate, but was defeated. His famous debate with Douglass lifted him into national prominence and made him a strong presidential possibility. In 1860 he was nominated by the Republicans for President, was elected, and inaugurated March 4, 1861. No President ever faced a more difficult situation. In 1864 he was again nominated and the following year

*Nancy Hanks — Lincoln*

inaugurated a second time, defeating General George B. McClellan, who was nominated on the platform that the Civil War was a failure. One month and ten days after his inauguration he was assassinated. He was struck down at the hour of his greatest victory, but his glory and fame have been enhanced with the passing years.

## MARY McDONOUGH — JOHNSON

ANDREW JOHNSON

*Seventeenth President of the United States, 1865-1869*

IN at least seven instances, sons were born in log-cabins who were destined to become the Presidents of the United States. Those thus born were: Jefferson, Jackson, Buchanan, Lincoln, Fillmore, Garfield and Arthur. Taylor missed it by about six months. Andrew Johnson may not have been born in a log-cabin, for he was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, but owing to the extreme poverty of his father, the house, doubtless, was little more than a shamble.

His father, Jacob Johnson, and his mother, Mary McDonough, were worthy and respectable people, and their families before them. Jacob Johnson was looked upon as an honest, upright man, having the confidence of those who knew him best. His chief handicap, seemingly, was his poverty. The *Raleigh Star*, in its issue of January the twelfth, 1812, contained this obituary notice:

“Died, in this city, on Sunday last, Jacob Johnson, who had for many years, occupied a humble, but useful station in society. He was city constable, sexton and porter of the State



## *Mary McDonough — Johnson*

Bank. In his last illness he was visited by the principle inhabitants of the city; by all he was esteemed for his honesty, sobriety, industry, and humane, friendly disposition. Among all by whom he was esteemed, none lament him more (except perhaps his relatives), than the publisher of this paper, for he owes his life on a particular occasion to the boldness and humanity of Johnson."

Johnson had practically sacrificed his life for his friend. Colonel Thomas Henderson, the publisher of the above-named paper, came near drowning when his canoe upset. Johnson was a witness to the scene. Without any hesitancy, he plunged into the water, swam out to the drowning man, and, although his life was almost extinct when rescued, he recovered. Johnson never recovered from his effort in life-saving, and died from exhaustion. It meant something for a boy to have a father like that. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Andrew Johnson was born December the twenty-ninth, 1809, and was therefore only a little over three years old when left fatherless, without fortune or influential friends. His widowed mother, in her poverty, was entrusted with the task of caring for a son who was destined to become the President of the United States. Of the seven widows mentioned in this book, none had a more difficult task than Mrs. Johnson, owing to the impoverished condition of her purse. After the death

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of Mr. Johnson, Andrew and his mother dropped completely out of sight, from the time he was less than four until he was ten. Nobody knows how Mrs. Johnson managed to get along; however, she must have found some way.

We read today of the "poor whites," of the South, impoverished and uneducated. The Johnson family belonged to this class of people. Even colored folks, then as well as now, spoke contemptuously of them. They did not know the value of an education, had no aspiration in that direction, and only a few ever attended school. Andrew's experience was no exception to that of the other "poor whites." He never attended school a day in his life. When he reached manhood, he could read only imperfectly, and could not write at all. Think of one who was never privileged to know the benefit of one schoolday's routine, fitting himself to serve his state in the Legislature, later as Governor, and the nation as Congressman, in the Senate of the United States, and finally exalted to the presidential chair!

His lot in early life was a hard one. When ten, he was apprenticed to a master tailor named Selby, and that apprenticeship was to last seven long years. A gentleman living in Raleigh was in the habit of reading to the young workingmen during their hours of relaxation. Johnson was among those who heard him read. This man would not only read items of local and national interest, but also the

*Mary McDonough — Johnson*

speeches of English statesmen. Young Johnson was fired with a resolve to learn to read. The gentleman made him a present of the book. From that choice present, he learned the alphabet, and then to spell out the words. He borrowed what books he could and would read and study from two to three hours every night. A few months before his apprenticeship expired, he ran away and began working for himself. We believe he was led to do this because of the necessity of caring for his widowed mother; this the sequel seems to prove. He had not deserted his master tailor long before his course of action began to prey upon his mind, and not having money to spare for travel to the city where Selby lived, he walked the entire twenty miles. His motive in returning was to apologize for running away and to pay for the months of service still due Mr. Selby. He was still less than eighteen, he had served nearly seven years as an apprentice, and had a dependent mother to care for. Tenderly, he will care for her to the utmost of his ability, she who had cared for him in her poverty during his early childhood. In 1826, he went to Greenville, East Tennessee. He took his mother with him. Like an affectionate and dutiful son, he resolved to share his destiny and fortune with his mother, and this mother, to his honor be it said, he always, as his fortune increased, handsomely supported until her death. As honor and fame and wealth came to him, he never outgrew his mother,

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neither did his affection for her decrease; she was foremost in his thought.

One of the best things Andrew Johnson ever did was to marry Miss Eliza McCordell, to whom he was indebted for what education he ever secured. She was a very intelligent woman and at once became interested in assisting him in his studies. He could never repay the debt he owed his teacher-wife. "What a group! What a study! The youth's fingers mechanically plying the needle, his brain alive, following the instructions of his wife-teacher, or with a bright almost childish satisfaction, meeting her approval by correct answers! After work hours were over, she taught him to write. What a living, ennobling romance was there being enacted in the wilds of Tennessee!"

When only twenty, he held his first public office, to which he had been duly elected by the people of Greenville — that of town commissioner. This was no small compliment to a young mechanic under age. When twenty-two, he was elected the mayor of the town. No man who afterward became President of the United States had more hardships and so little to encourage him in his early life as Andrew Johnson. The "tailor" President deserves much credit and is truly deserving of high praise for what he made of himself. From 1828-1843, he was a member of Congress, and again from 1845-1853, and in 1857 he became a member of the United States Senate.

## *Mary McDonough -- Johnson*

Would Andrew Johnson ever have been President of the United States had it not been for his semi-military career, as the military governor of Tennessee? Are the American people hero-worshippers? Johnson had been a lifelong Democrat. All the political offices he ever held had come from that party. In 1862, President Lincoln appointed Senator Johnson military governor of Tennessee, with the rank of brigadier-general. The Senate at once confirmed the nomination. His administration has been pronounced brilliant. Johnson had had a unique experience. He had denounced treason on the floor of the United States Senate, in the mountains of East Tennessee, in the cities and towns of his state. He had borne personal indignities; he had been denounced as an outlaw, burned in effigy and a price set on his head; his home, built by his own hands, had been confiscated, and his sick wife and child driven into the street; and so he had become a popular national character. When Mr. Lincoln was nominated for the presidency, he turned toward Governor Johnson, whom he had appointed to office, and between whom a warm friendship had developed, for his running mate. He received the nomination for that high office from the Republican party, and with Mr. Lincoln was elected, and upon the death of Mr. Lincoln assumed the presidency of the United States.

It is greatly to the credit of Andrew Johnson that he was never ashamed of his humble origin and



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obscure occupation of his earlier days. His mother, once poor and friendless, he ever honored and with her shared his fortune. He never permitted any sneer at his calling, or any attempted disparagement of the laboring classes to pass unchallenged. On one occasion, on the floor of the United States Senate, he said,

“Sir, I do not forget that I am a mechanic, neither do I forget that Adam was a tailor, and sewed fig-leaves, or that our Saviour was the son of a carpenter.”

Coming from the ranks of the poor and common people himself, he espoused their cause throughout his career, and was always popular among them. His lack of a liberal education was doubtless responsible for his obstinence and narrow-mindedness, which he at times exhibited.

Andrew Johnson represented the people. He and his estimable wife lie buried side by side in the cemetery at Greenville, Tennessee, the scene of their early struggles. The family plot is adorned by a handsome monument, and at the base of the monument these words are inscribed:

“HIS FAITH IN THE PEOPLE NEVER PERISHED.”



## HANNAH SIMPSON — GRANT

ULYSSES S. GRANT

*Eighteenth President of the United States, 1869–1877*

THE Grant family is of Scotch origin. The founder of the American family, Matthew Grant, sailed from England in the ship *Mary and John*, in 1630. Ulysses S. Grant came from fighting stock. His great-grandfather, Noah Grant, lost his life fighting the French and Indians in 1756. His grandfather, also named Noah, took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill, and continued in the army until the fall of Yorktown. The motto of the Scottish clan of Grants was "Stand fast, stand sure." It fits the most distinguished of all the Grants as if made for him.

The father of Ulysses, Jesse Root Grant, was a tanner of small means. He had a strong character, and while not blessed with a very liberal education, knew the value of one. He was a frequent contributor to the Western press. He won the love of Hannah, daughter of John Simpson, a slender, comely maiden, who had come with her father from Pennsylvania to Clermont County, Ohio, in 1818. They were married June 24, 1821, and began house-keeping in a little cabin home near the Ohio River. In this one-story cabin of two rooms, a cabin almost

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as humble in appearance as that in which Lincoln first saw the light of day, Ulysses S. Grant was born. This cabin stood comparatively unchanged up to 1885, when it was taken down and removed to Columbus, Ohio, as a relic. The new baby was christened Hiram Ulysses, but at West Point his name was made out Ulysses Sydney. That name he accepted while at Military Academy, but when he left he changed Sidney to Simpson in honor of his mother.

As young Ulysses grew up, his neighbors declared that he was growing up like his mother. She was indeed a rare woman, beloved by all, old and young. Her neighbors who knew and loved her best called her "a noble woman." She possessed a strong character, was quiet and reserved, even-tempered, and very patient. Surely in this we see a picture of General Grant as the world came to know him. She was the most reticent of persons. "Ulysses got his reticence, patience, equable temper, from his mother," is the verdict of those who knew both his father and mother. Others went even farther and said, "he got his *sense* from his mother." She was just the sort of person to whom others would go to tell of their troubles and entrust with their confidence, but she never unburdened her heart to others; she was beloved by all, nevertheless. She took a quiet pride in her family history, but seldom mentioned it to others. She never argued, boasted, or gossiped with others about others. She seldom

## *Hannah Simpson — Grant*

laughed, never complained, and her illustrious son declares he never saw her shed a tear. When Ulysses left home for West Point, friends in the home wept at his going, but she wept not; calmly serene. Young Ulysses noticed it and spoke of it to his weeping friends. Although his mother was a very religious woman, she was not Puritanically so. She wanted her children to enjoy themselves, and left them largely free to select their pleasures. She did not hedge them about with a formidable array of "don'ts."

Mrs. Grant was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Many an itinerant Methodist preacher enjoyed the hospitality of her home. She governed her children without the rod. Grant declared that he had no recollection of ever being punished at home, either by scolding or whipping by either father or mother. This was a most remarkable statement to make, and one that can be made by but few. In return for the tender affection manifested by this mother for her children, they were tractable, well-behaved, never boisterous, nor rude in the family circle. Ulysses was taught to be prompt in doing, or at least in attempting to do, whatever he was told. He was honest to the farthing, and incapable of crookedness, and, as a boy, valued strict truth-telling. We are told that the closest comrades of his boyhood insist that he was never guilty of a deliberate falsehood.

Mrs. Grant never praised her sons or daughters in

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the presence of others. When Ulysses became a distinguished national character, she scrupulously refrained from speaking boastingly of her distinguished son, and when others sounded his praises in her ears, she would blush like a schoolgirl, and frequently leave the room. When he was elected to the presidency, Mrs. Grant said of him, as Mary Washington had said of her son, "He was always a good boy." She expressed no more surprise at his election to this high office than did Washington's mother when he became President of the United States in 1789. When old age came, she still possessed a calm, winning manner, and a face still sweet and still young. We are told that the best thing Jesse Grant ever did was to marry Hannah Simpson. He pays this delightful tribute to her worth: "Her steadiness, firmness, and strength of character have been the stay of the family through life. She was always careful, and most watchful over her children; but never austere, and not opposed to their free participation in innocent amusements." Colonel F. G. Grant, the President's son, speaks thus of her: "She was one of the most modest and unselfish of women. Her intimate friends greatly appreciated her rare worth and excellent qualities, many of which the General inherited. Devoted as she was to him, his honors and success never betrayed her into an act or remark which would indicate that her head was turned by them. She was glad and thoughtful, and, with the loving

## *Hannah Simpson — Grant*

faithfulness of a Christian mother, she had long made his welfare the subject of earnest prayer. She had faith in his future, though not great worldly expectations, and during the last years of his life, her interest in his future had special reference to that part on which they have both now entered."

From the influence of such a mother, crowned with charming Christian graces, we are not surprised at Grant's abhorrence of all obscene and profane language. "The restraining influence of his mother's teachings operated so powerfully upon his mind that he never uttered an oath in his life." No doubt the same influence was responsible for his abhorrence of obscenity. He would not tolerate for a moment the telling of an unclean story. He has been lauded to the skies for his firm stand in this particular, but we cannot eliminate the influence of his mother. Grant always held in reverence his mother's religion. Her gentle creed and spotless life he felt throughout his memorable career. Her chief thought seemed to be to look well to the ways of her household. She had a high sense of duty, particularly with regard to her children, whom she carefully trained and earnestly watched over during their early life. Grant would rather enjoy the company of this mother than to be the honored guest at a banquet given by his admiring countrymen. A few days after he had received his commission as general-in-chief of the Union Army, while in Washington, he received an invitation from President



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Lincoln to attend a military dinner at the White House in his honor. He thanked the President, but courteously declined. The dinner came off, but, as Mr. Lincoln said, "It was like Hamlet with the Prince left out." General Grant took a train for Cincinnati, Ohio, where his parents were living, and while the dinner was in progress, where he might have been the commanding figure, admired by all as the nation's military hero, this silent man of American history was enjoying the comradeship of his aged parents.

General Grant's mother lived long to enjoy the honors, military and civil, that came to her distinguished son. When she died, her pastor was the Rev. H. A. Henderson, D.D., who had served as colonel in the Confederate Army. Dr. Henderson felt that General Grant might prefer some other minister to officiate at the funeral of his mother than one who had fought against the Union Army, of which General Grant had been commander-in-chief. He accordingly sought an interview with the general, and told him to feel perfectly free to select any clergyman that he might desire. But the general replied in just the way we would expect him to, "No man will be asked to conduct the funeral services of my mother but her own pastor."

The affection Grant cherished in his heart for his mother is evidenced in a letter which he wrote to her shortly after he became a cadet at West Point: "I have occasionally been called upon to be sepa-



*Hannah Simpson — Grant*

rated from you, but never did I feel the full force and effect of this separation as I do now. I seem alone in the world without my mother. There have been so many ways in which you have advised me, when in the quiet of home I have been pursuing my studies, that I cannot tell you how much I miss you. I was so often alone with you, and you so frequently spoke to me in private, that the solitude of my situation here at the Academy among my silent books, and in my lonely room, is all the more striking. It reminds me the more forcibly of home, and most of all, dear mother, of you. But in the midst of all this, your kindly instructions and admonitions are ever present with me. I trust they may never be absent from me, as long as I live. How often do I think of them, and how well they strengthen me in every good word and work! My dear mother, should I progress well with my studies at West Point, and become a soldier of my country, I am looking forward with hope to have you spared to share with me in any advancement I may make. *I see now in looking over the records here how much American soldiers of the right stamp are indebted to good American mothers.* When they go to the fields, what prayers go with them; what tender testimonials of affection and counsel are in their knapsacks! I am struck, in looking over the history of the noble struggle of our fathers for national independence, at the evidence of the good influence exerted upon them by the women of the Revolution."

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The writer is responsible for the italics in the above letter. Thus wrote the young cadet to his absent mother. He was right when he said our country owes a great debt to the mothers of our famous men, and we add, particularly is this true of the mothers of our Presidents. History has proved that the hand of Hannah Simpson Grant was largely instrumental in presenting to this nation a son who became America's greatest soldier. The Grant America knows could not have been without the influence and guiding genius of that wise and good mother.

## SOPHIA BIRCHARD — HAYES

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

*Nineteenth President of the United States, 1877-1881*

THE ancestors of Rutherford B. Hayes were a strong, brave, simple race, following the plow, wielding the hammer, hewing out a new way in a new land. They did not seek public office, neither did they enjoy uncommon social distinction. They seemed to have an unusual gift in winning superior women for their wives. These women came from families where there was social distinction, where the men did not hold public office, and whose sons had fought on the battle-field. They had also enjoyed the benefits of a liberal education. Rutherford, the grandfather of the nineteenth President, married Miss Chloe Smith; she became the mother of eleven children. The Hayes children and grandchildren declare that they cannot pay too much tribute to the influence of this remarkable woman. She was deeply pious, an incessant toiler, a famous cook, and excelled in fancy needlework. She sketched her patterns with her own pencil from the natural leaf and flower of the garden. One of her eleven children was named Rutherford, in after years known as the father of the President; so there were three in succession having that name.

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

On September the nineteenth, 1813, Rutherford married Miss Sophia Birchard, daughter of Roger and Drusilla Austin Birchard. The parents of both families resided at Wilmington, Vermont. In 1817, they moved to Delaware, Ohio, on a large farm that Mr. Hayes had purchased. At that time they had two children. In July, 1822, when Mr. Hayes was but thirty-five years old, he suddenly died, and three months later his widow gave birth to a son, naming him after his father and including her maiden name. This was the child that was destined to become President of the United States, and to this young widowed mother was assigned the task of his entire training and education, and for the second time a widowed mother was entrusted with the entire charge of bringing up one who was to sit in the presidential chair,—the first, the mother of Andrew Jackson. But, again, we find another Hayes had made a wise choice in the selection of a wife, for Mrs. Sophia Birchard Hayes was another remarkable woman. She was not left in poverty, as Mrs. Jackson was, but in comfortable circumstances, and she was a good manager. She had a happy, sunny disposition, which was contagious. She was very religious, having been brought up in the New England Puritanical school; when they moved to Ohio, she and her husband united with the Presbyterian Church. Her character was strong, her will resolute and self-reliant. This is peculiarly set forth in the following incident. In 1824, when

*Sophia Birchard — Hayes*

Rutherford was less than two years old, she visited her old home in Vermont, — a distance of sixteen hundred miles. The journey was made by stage and consumed nearly two months. Not long after her husband's death, her oldest son was drowned; this left Rutherford and his little sister as the surviving members of Mrs. Hayes' family. The little brother and sister became deeply attached to each other, were constant playmates and almost inseparable. . . . Mrs. Hayes's training of her children was rather strict, but the children seemed to thrive under it. Rutherford was nicknamed "Ruddy," and never did a boy have a more appropriate name, for he was always healthy and rosy-cheeked. At an early age his mother became his teacher. She taught him how to spell and read, and also lessons that were to be useful to him in after life, in precept and example. He was taught the fine art of learning how to command and govern himself, so great a necessity should he in after years be called upon to command others. Mrs. Hayes never surrendered to the schoolmaster the responsibility of developing the mental and moral nature of her children. Mothers never should do this. She was a perfect past-master in the art of establishing a workable reconciliation between work and play. The book and ball club, pen and gun, slate and fishing-tackle under her skillful direction were brought into harmonious relation. The play instinct is nature's gift and needs proper development along legitimate

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

channels, the same as the mind. Mrs. Hayes, as master-builder, taught her son how to construct a character-building into which went "good work, true work, square work," just such work as would be wanted when the structure would be tested in the fierce storms of life. Daily under her guidance, without sound of axe, hammer or tool of iron, this invisible structure went up.

Rutherford was sent to Middletown, Connecticut, to be prepared for college. An academy was located here in charge of Isaac Webb, an instructor of much merit. He was a Yale man, and soon discovered the studious habits of young Hayes. When fitted for college, he was anxious to have Mrs. Hayes send her son to Yale, and wrote her to that effect. He spoke highly of his pupil, and he was sure he would bring honor to his mother. But Yale seemed so far away from the Hayes home in Ohio, the mother could not reconcile herself to that plan. She began to correspond with the authorities of Kenyon College, Ohio, which college he entered in 1838, and although the youngest student in the graduating class of 1842, he won the highest honor and was made the valedictorian.

Mr. Hayes served with distinction during the Civil War, enlisting at the beginning of hostilities in 1861. He had already won distinction at the Bar, and was compelled to make a great sacrifice, but he responded where duty called. He enlisted for the whole war and was commissioned major of



*Sophia Birchard — Hayes*

the Twenty-Third Ohio Volunteers. On several occasions he narrowly escaped death. At South Mountain, in 1862, he was severely wounded. He had the wound bound up, and was soon seen at the head of his regiment. Later, he was carried from the field in a fainting condition from loss of blood. Upon recovering, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. In the Battle of Winchester, his horse, while at full speed, fell dead under him. He was thrown from the saddle and severely bruised. For these gallant services he was brevetted major-general. While the war was still in progress, he was nominated by the Republicans for Congress, his brilliant military achievements making him a popular military hero and candidate. He consented to accept the nomination with the understanding that he would not take his seat, if elected, until the war was over. His party friends urged him to take part in the canvass. In reply he said, "Any man who would leave the army at this time to electioneer for Congress ought to be scalped." He was elected by a large majority, but he refused to take his seat until, as he declared, he could come "by way of Richmond." In 1867 he was elected governor of Ohio, and in 1876 he was nominated by the Republicans for the presidency, and took office March the fifth, 1877.

Mrs. Hayes lived to see her son return from the army hailed as a military hero. She lived to see him elected a member of Congress, but died before

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he was nominated for governor. Her pride in her son was unbounded. Would that she might have lived to have seen him crowned with still higher honors by his countrymen. She died at Columbus, Ohio, in 1866, surviving her husband, his widow forty-four years. General Hayes was constant in the ministries of filial affection as long as his widowed mother lived. From her he had inherited a strong, forceful character, resolute will, and essential qualities for leadership.

His strong religious tendencies he also inherited from his mother. He was particularly fond of the Bible. In his Diary we read, "Have been reading Genesis for several Sundays, not as a Christian reads for 'spiritual consolation or instruction,' neither as an infidel reads to carp, quarrel and criticise, but as one who wishes to be informed in the earliest and most wonderful of all literary productions. The literature of the Bible should be studied as one studies Shakespeare, for illustration and language, for its true pictures of man and woman nature, and for its earliest historic record." General Hayes accepted the fundamental principles of religion. He was always regular in attending church services. After his marriage to Miss Lucy Webb, he attended with his wife the Methodist Episcopal Church, because his wife was a member of that church. While he considered himself a Christian, he never united with any church. In his Diary, May the seventeenth, 1890, we have his confession: "I am not a sub-

*Sophia Birchard — Hayes*

scriber to any creed; I belong to no church. But in a sense of satisfaction to myself, and believed by me to be important, I try to be a Christian, or rather, I want to be a Christian, and help do Christian work." The Sunday before his fatal illness, he declared, "I am a Christian, according to my conscience, in belief, not, of course, by the orthodox standard, but I am content, and have a feeling of trust and safety." General Hayes disappointed his mother in only one respect, which was that he failed to accede to her request by publicly uniting with some church.

The strict Puritanical notions of the mother of President Hayes were also reflected in her son. While to Mrs. Hayes, the President's wife, is given the honor of being the first President's wife to banish liquors from the White House table, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union have made much of it, as they have the right to do, and have honored her for her total abstinence rules and enforcements, and have presented to the White House a portrait of Mrs. Hayes, which for a time at least adorned the walls of one of the rooms of the White House,—the suggestion to thus banish wines came first from the President. After President Hayes had retired from office, his personal views were published, which were as follows: "When I became President, I was fully convinced that whatever might be the case in other countries, with people in our climate, and with the excitable, nervous temperament of our people, the habitual use of intoxi-

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cating drinks was not safe. I regarded the danger of the habit as especially great in political and official life. It seemed to me that to exclude liquors from the White House would be wise and useful as an example, and would be approved by people generally. The suggestion was particularly agreeable to Mrs. Hayes, for she had been a total abstinence woman from childhood. We had never used liquors in our own home, and we determined to continue our home customs in our official residence in Washington." So we are forced to the conclusion that the *suggestion* of banishing liquors from the White House table came from the President, and in this there was lurking some of the strict notions of the New England mother, Sophia Birchart. It would be hard to get away from the teachings of such a mother — and it is well.

## ELIZA BALLOU — GARFIELD

JAMES A. GARFIELD

*Twentieth President of the United States, 1881*

**J**AMES A. GARFIELD inherited on his mother's side his fine oratorical powers, imagination and finer sentiments. His mother, Eliza Ballou, was born in Richmond, New Hampshire, September 21, 1801, where Hosea Ballou, a relative and founder of Universalism in this country, was born. The Ballous were noted for their eloquence and poetical gifts. They were small in stature, and were called a "French pony breed." They originally came from France, and were numbered among the Huguenot fugitives, expelled for their religious views by the foolish edict of Nantes.

From his father, Mr. Garfield inherited his physical development and energy, for he was a man of prodigious strength. His grandfather, Solomon Garfield, was offered a grindstone weighing five hundred pounds if he would carry it home. This he did, carrying it one mile without leaning against a rail or fence for rest. But the dynamic forces that were to take young Garfield out of the range of all former Garfields lay "coiled up in the fine, sensitive, religious, intellectual nature of his mother."

When Eliza Ballou was eight years old, her father

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died. The mother heroically cared for her little family of four children, and later moved to Worcester, New York; here Eliza had as playmate for five years her future lover and husband, Abram Garfield. James Ballou, Eliza's brother, induced his widowed mother to move to Zanesville, Ohio. This separated young Abram Garfield from the little Ballou girl. Later, Abram was bound out to service with one James Stone. He broke these fetters at eighteen and set out for Ohio, having all the while kept in mind the little girl with whom he used to play in New York. He soon discovered her, renewed vigorously his courtship, and when she was eighteen and he was nineteen they were married.

In the heart of a dense forest, in Orange County, Ohio, in a log-cabin, James was born. His father lost his life needlessly at thirty-three. A fire broke out in the woods which was rapidly approaching Garfield's clearing, near a fine wheat field. With all his tremendous physical energy, he fought the fire all day, ditching, clearing away leaves, and doing the work of ten men. He diverted the course of the fire and saved his wheat. He came in at night overheated and exhausted. He sat down in the doorway to cool off. He had been warned of danger of sitting in a draft in his overheated condition, but he believed that one in his robust health would be in no danger, so he sat still. A quack doctor came along and said, "You are in danger, Garfield." He put a blister around his throat, and the inflammation



## *Eliza Ballou — Garfield*

was drawn from his body to his throat, and this man, after three days of illness and intense suffering, a giant in strength, was literally choked to death. An author says, "He fought fire like a Viking, and died like one." Just before his death he got up and walked across the room, looked out at his oxen, called them by name, went back and sat down on the bed. Turning to his wife, he said, "Eliza, I have brought you four young saplings into these woods; take care of them." He died, sitting up in bed. Eliza Garfield kept her charge. She cared for the four young saplings. She was left with four young children, the oldest but ten and the youngest, James; only eighteen months old. The older children were old enough to understand what death meant; not so little "Jimmy." He would pull at the sheets of his father's bier, and piteously cry for his father, wondering why he continued to sleep so long. The neighbors said Mrs. Garfield could never support the family. The children would have to be bound out, or given away. Suppose Mrs. Garfield had acted on their suggestion. If she had, the world would never have heard of the name of James A. Garfield.

Eliza Ballou Garfield was face to face with a serious situation. The farm had never been fully fenced. The stock was not paid for. Fruit trees had not been planted long enough to produce fruit. There was only a meagre stock of provisions on hand. Crops were to be gathered, and there was nobody to

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

do the work. This was the task facing the young widow. But she was an unnoticed heroine. She never for a moment dreamed of selling the farm, or scattering her children. She believed a way would be found out of her perplexing difficulties.

She sold off part of the farm, and with the proceeds paid off the debt on the remaining thirty acres. She had left, thirty acres and two cows, free from debt. Thomas, the oldest boy, and his mother attempted to complete the unfinished rail fence. It takes a long stretch of the imagination to think of a mother of a President actually turning rail-splitter. A field of wheat needed one hundred rails to complete the fencing, and we are told she actually assisted her son, Thomas, in splitting the needed rails. She helped gather the crops, and added to her income by assisting the neighbors, spinning, weaving, and knitting. Little Jimmy was the pet of his mother, and the pride of his brother, Thomas, and his sisters. Thomas would save his pennies in order to purchase shoes for his little brother so that he could attend church.

At ten, James was helping out his mother's income by working for the neighbors on their farms. He had a liking for the sea. His mother was opposed to his taking up a seafaring life, but he made an attempt at it. Failing to secure a position on any of the vessels on Lake Erie, he tried the canal, and secured for himself a position. One day he was thrown in the water. As he sank, with no one in

## *Eliza Ballou — Garfield*

sight, he thought he must surely drown. He was almost miraculously saved, and began to think that such a deliverance was well-nigh providential. He knew his mother was not pleased with his work, and that had disturbed him, so he was soon on his way home. He reached home at night. Here he saw a scene in the window which he never forgot. He saw his mother on her knees, the open Bible before her, praying: "Oh, turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give strength to thy servant, and save the son of thy handmaid." He knew then the prayer he had just heard that night was the prayer his devoted mother offered for him every night. He waited until she had finished, then opened the door, and the anxious prayer of the mother was answered. The next moment mother and son were locked into each other's embrace. Who can ever know how much it is worth to have a praying mother! Henceforth he determined to devote himself toward securing an education. This decision met with his mother's approval. He fitted himself for college in Hiram Eclectic Institute, paying his expenses by ringing the college bell, and, with his roommate, cooking his own meals and doing his own house-keeping. When eighteen he was converted and united with the church.

Garfield is another military hero who became President of the United States. If there are those who say a good military man makes a poor President, then we have had plenty of poor Presidents.

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We do not believe the statement to be a true one. At the beginning of hostilities, Garfield enlisted in the service of his country. He was commissioned lieutenant-colonel of volunteers. Within a few months he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. "In February, 1863, he joined the army of the Cumberland, under Rosencrans, just after the victorious but severe Battle of Stone River, and was appointed chief-of-staff. In the discussion in regard to a forward movement, Garfield as chief-of-staff collated the written opinions of the seventeen corps, division, and cavalry generals, summarized their statements with cogent arguments of his own, in a report which Whitelaw Reid pronounces 'the ablest military document submitted by a chief-of-staff to his superior during the war.' " In 1863, he was promoted to the rank of major-general, after the Battle of Chickamauga. In that year he was elected a member of Congress. He was reluctant about accepting, but President Lincoln urged him to abandon his military career, and he made the sacrifice when convinced his duty lay in that direction. Garfield was only thirty-two when he entered Congress. He had been an under-teacher, the head of a college; a preacher, after the manner of the Church of the Disciples; a member of the State Senate; a colonel in the army, brigadier-general, major-general, and a member-elect of Congress,—all this before he had been out of college eight years; a rise so rapid in both civil and military life without

## *Eliza Ballou — Garfield*

precedent in the history of this country. He served as a member of Congress for seventeen years. In 1880, he was elected to the United States Senate, and finally became President of the United States, March the fourth, 1881. He has been considered the best qualified for that high office, in the way of a broad and liberal education, since John Quincy Adams. He lived and died a consistent Christian. He was known to have said, "I had rather be defeated in office than to make capital out of my religion."

At the inaugural ceremonies, when Mr. Garfield had finished reading his inaugural, he turned to Chief Justice Waite and said, "I am now prepared to take the oath." The clerk of the Supreme Court, who attended the chief justice, produced a Sunday-school edition of the Bible, doubtless at the request of Mr. Garfield. The President-elect took this book, and, after the chief justice had administered the oath, General Garfield kissed the page, bowed to the chief justice, and turned first of all to the wrinkled little woman who stood at his side, whom he fondly called mother, and affectionately kissed her in the presence of twenty thousand applauding citizens of this great country. Mrs. Garfield was the first mother of a President who had the honor of seeing her son inducted into this high office.

It was a proud day for Eliza Garfield. She was being rewarded for all her sacrifice and toil. "President Garfield," says Bishop Simpson, "was the



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pride of his mother — he was her darling boy, and when the news reached her that some one had shot him, she cried, forgetting all about his presidency, ‘Who could be so cruel and so wicked as to kill my baby!’” She fairly idolized her distinguished son, and her sufferings during the long protracted illness of the President, after he had been shot by the assassin, Guiteau, were pathetic. The mind of the stricken President, while on his sick bed, frequently reverted to his mother. Amidst his own sufferings, he longed to help and cheer her. When his friends were banished from his bedside — not even James G. Blaine, whom he loved as a brother, was permitted to see him — he thought of his aged mother, isolated and in distress. With his own hands he wrote the following letter:

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 11, 1881.

*Dear Mother:*

Don’t be disturbed about conflicting reports about my condition. It is true I am still very weak, and on my back, but I am gaining every day, and need only time and patience to bring me through.

Give my love to all my relatives and friends, and especially to sisters Hetty and Mary.

Your loving son,

JAMES A. GARFIELD.

Mrs. ELIZA GARFIELD,  
Hiram, Ohio.

The letter began strong and steady, but the handwriting records a fast-ebbing strength. The last



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word, was more like the driving of a pen than a word. It was a pathetic revelation of a fast-ebbing strength. On his death-bed he whispered, "Will my countrymen forget me?" So speaks the heart instinctively and constantly. God forbid that his countrymen should ever sink so low as to forget their martyred President!

When dying, he was little Jimmy Garfield again, back in the home of his boyhood, with his loved ones around him, and by the side of the mother who so fondly loved him. He died the day before his aged mother was eighty. When told that he was dead, "there was an agony that speech cannot express, nor pen portray; a mother in Israel weeping for a son, who was not and could not be comforted. The boy who had been her hope and pride, the idol of her heart, was dead. With tearful eyes she said, 'To-morrow I will be eighty years old, but I shall not see the beginning of another year. James has gone, and I shall not be long after him.' "

Side by side rest mother and son in the same cemetery. There are three Presidents who are buried alongside their mothers. These three distinguished sons are Martin Van Buren, James A. Garfield and William McKinley.

## MELVINA STONE — ARTHUR

CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR

*Twenty-First President of the United States,  
September 19, 1881-1885*

**W**ILLIAM ARTHUR, the father of Chester Alan Arthur, was an Irish immigrant, born in Antrim, Ireland, in 1796. He had a vigorous intellect, was fond of books, and religiously inclined. Although his parents were poor, they gave their son a fine education, sending him to Belfast College, from which in due time he graduated. Shortly afterward he turned his face toward Canada. In Canada, he spent some years. At that time it appears as though he served as a lay-reader in an Episcopal Church. Later he united with the Baptist Church, and was ordained as a clergyman of that denomination. He served with distinction some of their important pulpits.

Before coming to the United States, he fell in love with Miss Melvina Stone, the daughter of a Canadian Methodist preacher. Miss Stone's father strenuously opposed the marriage, so the young people eloped, crossed the border-line into the United States and were married by a Methodist preacher.

Melvina Stone Arthur was the fortunate possessor

*Melvina Stone — Arthur*

of the Christian graces and was an attractive and cultured woman. She had much force of character, and gave her son, by precept and example, the character and courage to win and occupy worthily commanding positions. How fortunate our Presidents have been in having had mothers of forceful character and of exemplary Christian lives. Would the results have been the same had they come from homes where such graces were unknown? Many a young man who in after life wins large success does not know to what extent he is indebted to his parents, for the nurture and training they have given him in a home where the atmosphere has been surcharged with a spirit of devotion to Almighty God, and an adherence to the principles of righteous living. The conditions which prepared for public duty the three men the Empire State gave to the Republic, up to this time, to serve as President, viz., Martin Van Buren, Millard Fillmore and Chester A. Arthur, were strikingly the same; each the architect of his own fortune, without the aid of friends or wealth. The three were blessed with eminently good mothers. But these have been the kind of men who have usually been in control of parties and government. In youth, there has been the training and influence of the Christian home; the start in life with no other endowment than health, character, courage and honorable ambition.

When William Arthur was called to the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Fairfield, Vermont, the

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church to which he was called was building a parsonage, but it was not ready for occupancy. Nearby was a log-house unoccupied, and in it Mr. Arthur took his family, and in this rude structure, on October the fifth, 1830, Chester Alan Arthur was born,—another son born in humble circumstances, destined to become the President of the United States. An eye-witness describes the coming of the new Baptist minister to Fairfield, Vermont.

“ Nearly fifty years ago, the writer, then a school-boy, lived in a remote district in Fairfield, Vermont. I well remember the coming of the new Baptist preacher of Irish birth, but of remarkable ability and eloquence. He drew audiences unheard of before in that rustic community. He at first preached in the District school house, which soon failed to hold half the audience. Finally a spacious neighboring barn was procured, as a place of worship. I well remember the appearance of that first audience. The women were mostly seated on improvised seats of slabs on the barn floor; deacons and older men occupied the stable; the young folks climbed upon the hay-mow. To this audience that eloquent and well-educated young minister preached with great effect. A church was soon built. On moving his family there, no vacant house was suitable to receive them, so the minister, with his wife and four daughters, moved into a small log-cabin. One night my mother was mysteriously absent, and our anxious inquiries were answered evasively by our father. But in the morning she returned and astonished us by saying that that night a new baby boy had been sent to the minister’s house.”

## *Melvina Stone — Arthur*

That boy born in that humble log-house was to be known to the world as Chester Alan Arthur, twenty-first President of the United States.

Like most ministers, Mr. Arthur, though far from being wealthy, was determined that his son should have a liberal education. No one will ever know how much parents in parsonage homes have sacrificed that their sons might enjoy the blessings of an education. The father in most instances receiving but a meagre salary, yet both parents denying themselves of many comforts and even necessities, that might have served to prolong their lives, in order that greater blessings and opportunities of usefulness might be enjoyed by their children. President Cleveland spoke in highest terms of the sacrifices his parents made in this respect. Young Arthur was fifteen years old when he entered the sophomore class of Union College, Schenectady, New York. Because of his youth, he attracted considerable attention. He received his diploma when he was eighteen years of age.

In 1851, Mr. Arthur, fresh from Union College, came to North Pownall, and one summer taught the village school. Two years later, James A. Garfield, then a student in Williams College, several miles distant, also came to North Pownall, and taught in the same room formerly occupied by Mr. Arthur. How strange that these two college young men, teaching in the same humble country school, from a common starting-point in life, should, after a



## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

lapse of a quarter of a century, be strangely brought together,—the one running as a candidate for the high office of President of the United States, the other for the office of Vice-President, both on the same party ticket, and both elected to their high office!

Young Arthur decided on the law as his profession. He appreciated the sacrifices his parents had made in giving him a college education. He could not ask for more, and for this reason he taught school in order to procure funds which would enable him to continue his legal studies. The lessons in economy practiced in that parsonage home had not been lost on the son, for by the time he was ready to be admitted to the Bar, through his teaching he had saved, after paying all expenses, between five and six hundred dollars.

When twenty-three he became a member of a prominent firm in New York City. He soon made his way to the front. He championed the cause of the colored people when considered unpopular to do so. Many colored folk were among his clients. The negro was not permitted to ride on the street cars in New York City, although the law was not rigidly enforced. When a young colored girl was put off, Arthur determined to make a test case of it; he won out in the Supreme Court of New York. When the clash came between the North and the South, Mr. Arthur staunchly defended the North and the negro. At the beginning of hostilities he



*Melvina Stone — Arthur*

was entrusted with arming and subsisting of troops raised in New York. He served as quartermaster general, engineer-in-chief, and inspector general. He was commissioned colonel of the Ninth Regiment for immediate active service, but declined to serve at the urgent request of Governor Morgan of New York, who claimed his services were more greatly needed in the state than at the front. In four months, in 1861, under his supervision, there were sent from New York to Washington sixty-eight regiments of infantry, six battalions and ten batteries; an army larger than the combined forces of the Revolution was mustered into service during the war, sent by General Arthur from the Empire State. General Arthur filled every office to which he was appointed with ability and distinction. His fine training fitted him for the office of Vice-President of the United States, to which he was elected in November, 1880. When President Garfield died, September the nineteenth, 1881, he took the oath of office at once in his own home in New York City, and the day following was publicly inaugurated, in Washington, President of the United States.

## ANNE NEAL — CLEVELAND

GROVER CLEVELAND

*Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth President of the  
United States, 1885-1889 — 1893-1897*

**R**EV. RICHARD F. CLEVELAND, the father of Grover Cleveland, was of English descent. From an educational standpoint he was well equipped for his life work. He graduated from Yale College in 1824. Shortly after graduating, according to his daughter, Mrs. S. C. Yeomans, a sister of Grover Cleveland, he went to Baltimore, where he was employed as a teacher, and while thus engaged he studied theology under one Dr. Nevins. Later he entered Princeton Theological Seminary and was graduated in due time.

While engaged in teaching he met Miss Anne Neal, who became his bride in 1829. Miss Neal was the daughter of Abner Neal of Baltimore. Her father was of Irish extraction and was proud of his ancestry. Many traces of that nationality were apparent in his descendants. He operated a large bookbindery in connection with his retail bookstore. "Grandfather Neal," writes Mrs. Yeomans, "was a strict Methodist, and an older sister of my mother's married John A. Gere, who was prominent in the Baltimore Conference at that time, just before my

## *Anne Neal — Cleveland*

parents were married. They were married in 1829, and the record of their lives is a pride and joy to their children 'unto the third and fourth generation.' " Thus, according to the statement of Mrs. Yeomans, one daughter of Abner Neal, the " strict Methodist," married a prominent Methodist preacher, and another married a prominent Presbyterian preacher and became the mother of a President of the United States.

After Mr. Cleveland's marriage to Miss Neal he took his bride to his New England home, where he was serving as the pastor of a Presbyterian Church. Here the young couple began housekeeping. Mrs. Yeomans states that the bride took with her the colored " mammy " who in all likelihood had nursed her in her infancy.

Miss Neal has been described as a typical Southern woman of grace and beauty, with charming ways and kindly face. In appearance she was dignified, and her bearing was such as to give evidence of strength of character, and at any public function she would at once be the object of much attention. He who is at all conversant with the subject of eugenics would recognize at once that children blessed with such a mother as the Cleveland children were would be children of no ordinary cast. A white-haired man who had lived neighbor to the Clevelands at Holland Patent, said, " Such a woman could not have bad children."

On March 18, 1837, at Caldwell, New Jersey,

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

Grover Cleveland was born. Here he lived with his parents until he was four years of age, when his father, having been called to the pastorate of a Presbyterian Church at Fayetteville, Onondago County, New York, moved his family to that place. He was not exactly poor, but was far from being rich. The table no doubt was always amply supplied, for the mother was thrifty, a good housewife, and knew how to practise the conservation of food. The pastor's salary ranged from six hundred to one thousand dollars a year, never more; but six hundred dollars in those days meant far more in purchasing power than the same amount today. How those parents managed to provide for nine children on such a small income, and to educate them, remains a mystery. Mrs. Cleveland's children learned the value of money from their mother, and from her they learned the important lesson of thrift. No money which they had earned was spent on luxuries, for they had learned to practise close economy. Grover's father died when he was sixteen years of age, and the children faithfully sent out of their slender income to their mother what was not actually needed for their own support. Wilson, in his "Lives of the Presidents," states that from the time Grover Cleveland was admitted to the Bar in 1859, he regularly contributed toward the support of his mother up to the time of her death, which occurred in 1882.

His father's death seemed to close the doors of

## *Anne Neal — Cleveland*

any college, and he began the struggle of life. But Grover Cleveland was far from being an uneducated man. As Taine said concerning Napoleon, he was trained not by books or academies, but by activities; so the same, to a certain degree, applies to Grover Cleveland. However, on account of his lack of a college education, Mr. Cleveland was for a long time inclined to be shy of literary men, but he afterwards sought their companionship. He was also shy of colleges, refusing to accept a degree from Harvard University, but his residence in Princeton brought him in contact with the true college spirit, and he accepted a doctorate from Princeton University, and became one of its most influential trustees. Grover Cleveland paid this tribute to his father: "Looking back over my life, nothing seems to me to have in it more both of pathos and interest than the spectacle of my father, a hard-working country clergyman, bringing up acceptably a family of nine children, educating each member so that in after life none suffered any deprivation in this respect, and that, too, upon a salary which at no time exceeded one thousand dollars a year. It would be impossible to exaggerate the strength of character thus revealed."

Grover's mother was an ideal home-maker. The pull of the country home had more of an attraction to the children than any other place. Grover never allowed a long time to elapse without paying his mother a visit. When home, he was always doing



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something to make the house and grounds more attractive. He held it sufficient reward if the results of his effort received his mother's commendation. After his father's death he never allowed a year to pass by without paying his mother at least two visits. Two of Grover's brothers, Cecil and Frederick, served during the Civil War, and were afterwards lost at sea in 1872. A distinguished characteristic of the Cleveland family was the unswerving loyalty to each other — brothers, sisters, parents. The two brothers lost at sea have their names inscribed on the tombstone of their mother, and the date of their death. Below their names are the words, "Lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." This loyalty to each other was carried out into practical life. It taught them to be always loyal to their employers, loyal to their tasks, loyal to their friends, and loyal in their allegiance to the Almighty. Who was responsible for this fine trait of character? The fine home-maker, Grover Cleveland's mother, who knew how to transform the inside of the walls of a house into a HOME in its truest sense. Such home life, such devotion to each other, knit the souls of brothers and sisters into one compact whole.

Although Mr. Cleveland was a product of the North, a close student will easily discover the reason for his strong sympathies for the people of the South. This secret spring has never been discovered by historians or biographers. The problem is solved



when we bring into the personal equation his Maryland mother. Here we have the source of strong Southern sympathies. In conversation with Richard Watson Gilder on the eve of Cleveland's election to the presidency for the second time, he said, "One thing I mean to do if elected, and that is to bring out some of those younger Southern men who have stood up for right measures." But this had been the source he had pursued when elected the first time, in making up the personnel of his Cabinet, and in making appointments after his inauguration. Mr. Cleveland had the courage to stand by his convictions. He took no half-way action in giving the South its due. He was the first President bravely to appoint to high official position men of superior ability representing the South. This fact has been clearly set forth by historian and biographer, but it seems to have escaped their notice entirely to recognize the part that eugenics and maternal instinct had to do with such appointments. Might he not have pursued a different course had there been no Maryland mother? Mr. Cleveland appointed John R. Proctor, styled by Richard Watson Gilder as "that most attractive Kentuckian," President of the National Civil Service Commission. The first-class Foreign Missions he divided equally between the North and the South; of twelve ministers plenipotentiary, six were from the North and six from the South; of nine new ministers resident, six were from the

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North and three from the South; of seventy persons appointed to the diplomatic and consular service, thirty-eight were from the North and thirty-two from the South. In his Cabinet composed of seven members, the North and the South were almost equally represented: Thomas F. Bayard, secretary of state, was from Delaware; Mr. Garland, attorney-general, from Arkansas; L. Q. C. Lamar, secretary of the interior, from Mississippi. When he entered upon his second administration he pursued the same course in making Cabinet appointments. John G. Carlisle, secretary of the treasury, of Kentucky; Hilary A. Herbert, a former Confederate officer, secretary of the navy, from Alabama; Hoke Smith, secretary of the interior, from Georgia. Mr. Cleveland, addressing Secretary Herbert, said, "I put you in here on account, among other things, of your being an old wounded Confederate officer." He was the first President who braved public opinion by making such a statement. No one will question that in President Cleveland we can see the vanished hand of his Maryland mother helping to heal the hurt of the nation caused by the great Civil War.

The "spoils system" in politics was a thorn in the side of President Cleveland. He surrounded public office with a sort of sacredness. He strictly adhered to his convictions. Let others form their own opinion whether or not we see in this further evidence of faithful teaching in that parsonage home. Just before his nomination to the presi-

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dency for the third time he declared that he would "have the presidency clean or not at all." He cared more for principle than for the office. At a memorial meeting held March 18, 1909, President Taft summed up the chief characteristics of Mr. Cleveland: "Simplicity and directness of thought, sturdy honesty, courage of his convictions, and plainness of speech, with a sense of public duty that has been exceeded by no statesman within my knowledge. It was so strong in him, that he rarely wrote anything, whether in the form of a private or public communication, that the obligation of all men to observe the public interest was not his chief theme." The phrase "Public office is a public trust" will be forever associated with the name of President Cleveland. That he lived that doctrine is evident from the fact that when he accepted the nomination for mayor of Buffalo in 1881, he said, "Public officials are the trustees of the people," and in accepting the nomination for governor in 1882, he again said, "Public officers are the servants and agents of the people." This was his creed and this was the creed he lived.

The Cleveland children had the advantage of being brought up in a Christian home. The father was noted for his piety, and his mother was distinguished for great tenderness of heart, solicitous for the well-being of her family, and crowned with the graces of a Christian character. The family altar had its place in that home, and Grover Cleve-

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land never got away from its influence. His mother died in 1882, while he was serving as mayor of Buffalo, and just prior to his election as the governor of the state of New York. In the midst of a political campaign which meant so much to him, one would be liable to forgive a son who under such conditions permitted reflections concerning the mother who had died to be crowded out. But Mr. Cleveland was so devoted to his mother, and his whole life had been so deeply influenced, by her, that nothing of this character occurred in his mind. On the eve of his election to the governorship he wrote to his brother: "I have just voted, and I sit here in my office alone. If mother were alive I should be writing to her, and I feel as if it were time for me to write to someone who would believe what I write. . . . Do you know that if mother were alive, I would feel so much safer? I have always thought that her prayers had much to do with my success in life." What a tribute to motherhood! What a tribute to her Christian character, and the power of her prayer life! When elected to the presidency, we find the same abiding influence of a sainted mother clinging to a son to whom had come the highest honors the people of a great Republic could give. Mother was not to be crowded out. When Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated President of the United States he took the oath of office on a little pocket Bible given to him by his mother when he was a boy. "Many long years before," says

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Stoddard, "when an ambitious boy went out from his widowed mother's home in the village of Holland Patent, going to find a way in the thronged, hard-working world, he carried with him a little book, not too large to put into his pocket. It had been his mother's, and it was stamped with her name. It was the Book; and now it was held in the hand of Chief Justice Waite of the United States Supreme Court, who was to administer the oath of office to that boy, now raised to the Chief Magistracy of a great nation." Who can tell what memories were evoked as the President pressed to his lips that little book which he had evidently many times fondly handled, as the link binding him in his exalted position to the lonely boy leaving home for the first time, bearing away a mother's blessing, and her best gift — the Holy Bible! The mother had died in the little home in Holland Patent, that had been presented to her by her husband's friends, a gift representing his last three pastorates. No doubt there was framed in the mind of this distinguished man now taking the oath of office as President, a mental picture of that quiet little home, with its ever-faithful mother, as his lips pressed the lid of the little book that had come to him from her hands. For the moment there possibly faded from his view the distinguished throng of men and women who were by his side, and the vast throng of admiring countrymen that were before him, acclaiming him as their chief executive. For the third time a



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President or President-elect links the occasion of his inauguration with a devoted mother. The first instance was when General Washington, on his way to New York to be inaugurated, turned aside to bid a last and affectionate farewell to his aged mother. The second, when General Garfield, after taking the oath of office, turned first to his mother and kissed her; and the third, when Grover Cleveland took the oath of office on the little pocket Bible given to him by his mother when a boy.

No one will ever question the devotion of Grover Cleveland to his mother, and of her abiding influence over his life, after reading the beautiful letter from his sister, Mrs. S. C. Yeomans. Other historical data were cheerfully furnished by this sister, for which we are extremely grateful. The appended letter discloses the inner domestic side of Mr. Cleveland, that has never been given to the world. It reveals a side of President Cleveland that has eluded the biographer, and even his warm personal friend, Richard Watson Gilder, who enriched the thinking public by his fine volume, "Grover Cleveland; a Record of Friendship." Mrs. Yeomans' letter follows:

631 DELAMERE PLACE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.,

Nov. 15, 1920.

Dr. W. J. HAMPTON,

Port Richmond, New York.

*Dear Dr. Hampton:*

You certainly have chosen a very interesting and unique phase of Presidential biography, in tracing



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the development of character through their maternal devotional attitude.

. . . . .

I have abundant reason to believe that no mother ever received more loyal devotion from her children than did ours, and surely none ever deserved it more. Her sons honored her with prompt and loving obedience, and as she was left a widow before fifty years of age, they were also advisers and counselors. Grover was a special dependence and assistance with younger members of the family, and lost no opportunity to lessen the burden of family discipline, and cheer his mother by ready sympathy and brave companionship. Through the years of manhood a genial comradeship existed between mother and son, greatly to the advantage of the son and productive of comfort and pleasure to the mother. During the last summer of her life, when it became evident that we could not keep her with us longer, all business was laid aside and he was constantly at her call. The campaign for Governor of New York State was on, and in the quiet little home where the shadow of death rested, the messages, dispatches and letters lay unnoticed while he gave his attention to the revered invalid. When the end came, his first words were, "How can I live without my mother's prayers!" When we were consulting about the inscription for her resting-place, he would be satisfied with nothing except, "Her children arise and call her blessed." Many times in his strenuous after life he would say, "How much safer I would be if mother were here!" During the last days of his own life, he sent to the old

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home for one of the worn hymn books that were used at the family prayer hour in his boyhood home.

Very cordially yours,

S. C. YEOMANS.

## ELIZABETH FINDLEY IRWIN — HARRISON

### BENJAMIN HARRISON

*Twenty-third President of the United States,  
1889-1893*

**B**ENJAMIN HARRISON'S training was quite the ideal, if it be true that "The education of a child should begin one hundred years before its birth." If ever one were favored with an ancestry of which to be proud, surely he was. An ancestor of Benjamin was Thomas Harrison of England, who fought in Cromwell's army which was pitted against King Charles I. This was in about 1550. His bravery and military genius won for him the position of lieutenant-general. He was member of the parliamentary court appointed to try the King for high crimes and misdemeanors, and his signature is attached to the sentence of death pronounced upon him. When Charles II was restored to the throne, Thomas Harrison was tried and convicted as a regicide and suffered execution. He might have fled to America, and there found refuge, but he calmly stood his ground, and exhibited that bravery which has been the peculiar characteristic of his posterity. Benjamin Harrison, the patriot, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, is the next notable Harrison. He was the great-grand-

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father of the twenty-third President of the United States. His son, William Henry Harrison, is known to history as the American soldier with a record of a quarter of a century of brilliant service, and rounded out a fine career as President of the United States. His son, John Scott Harrison, served as a member of Congress for two terms, and was nominated for lieutenant-governor of Ohio, but declined. His son was the gallant soldier, eminent statesman and President — Benjamin Harrison. The Harrison family has furnished this country with a continuous public service covering over one hundred years — a record unprecedented by any other American family.

John Scott Harrison was the third son of President William Henry Harrison. On August the twelfth, 1831, he was married to Miss Elizabeth Findley Irwin, daughter of Archibald Irwin, of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Six children were born to bless the union.

Their home was at North Bend, Ohio, on a segment of the farm belonging to his father, and here, on August the twentieth, 1833, Benjamin Harrison was born. Elizabeth Irwin, his mother, has been described as a noble woman, an ideal wife and mother. She was refined and her mind enriched with a liberal education; her disposition was most amiable, and all who knew her loved her. The home life on the old farm was everything but prosaic. The father was domestic in his ways, enjoying

*Elizabeth Findley Irwin — Harrison*

most of all the companionship of his attractive family. The dining-room was large and adorned with a wide old-fashioned fireplace. The children love to reflect over the many delightful evenings spent in that dining-room, with the blazing, crackling logs lending cheer to the scene. After the evening meal was served the family would assemble. Tales were told of the thrilling events connected with the early history of the country, and often the name of some distinguished member of the family would be woven into the story. Little Ben Harrison had his first lessons in patriotism at the old-fashioned open fireplace in that dining-room.

Benjamin Harrison's mother was a most exemplary Christian woman. Her influence over her son in this particular was abiding. Among his earliest recollections was that of seeing his mother, when the hour of retirement had come, fold up her knitting, say "good-night" to the family, and withdraw by herself for prayer. This was her regular custom. When her son became a distinguished statesman, he would refer to this habit of his mother with profound reverence of feeling. The practice was a mystery to him then, as was the prayer she silently offered. He did not understand what it meant, and for that reason the impression made upon his mind was the more lasting. When a student at Miami University, he was converted and united with the Presbyterian Church, which was the church of his mother. Mr. Harrison served

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the church faithfully ever after, as a teacher and official; like his mother, he believed in prayer and was a praying man himself.

The school advantages of the rural districts of Ohio in those days were very meagre. General Lew Wallace describes the log-cabin school which young Ben attended: "The cabin was, as is usual, one of the very plainest. The windows were few and small. In one end was a great fireplace habitually filled with logs in the morning, to burn all day. The benches were slabs raised above the floor by sticks fitted in through auger holes. The little fellows, through the hours of the session, dropped their legs without touching the floor with their feet. Altogether, it was weary employment for them. But as their studies were spelling, reading, and writing, they were not put to much effort. At recess they ran wild, and made up for lost time at play. In that humble structure Benjamin Harrison began his education." He fitted himself for college by attending a school in Cincinnati. In due time he graduated from Miami University, at the early age of eighteen. He had decided on the law as his profession and when twenty-one was admitted to the Bar.

His professional career was interrupted by the Civil War. One morning in July, 1862, Governor Oliver P. Morton, of Ohio, said to him, "Ben, I want you to raise a regiment." It was a gloomy period for the North. Harrison at once responded. He



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soon got his regiment together, and was commissioned a colonel. During the next three years, he rendered most gallant service in the army. He "flung himself into the contest with the utmost energy. His record is of the highest. He moulded his regiment into a finished fighting unit. In battle he led with a fiery valor that brought new glory to his name. In camp he displayed a sympathy for the sufferings of his subordinates, and an anxiety for their comfort that made him beloved by his men." At the conclusion of the war he was brevetted brigadier-general of volunteers.

In 1888, General Harrison was elected President of the United States, and was inaugurated the following March the fourth, 1889. Such "the fine record of the only grandson of a President who has been an occupant of the White House by his own right." During the twenty-four years following the war, the Republican party had not ventured to nominate a candidate for President, with but one exception, who had not had a military title, and that exception resulted disastrously when the Plumed Knight of Maine was defeated by Grover Cleveland.

It has been apparent in the foregoing pages that Benjamin Harrison was another of our Presidents who was deeply devoted to his mother, and greatly influenced by her life. His widow, Mrs. Mary Lord Harrison, of Indianapolis, Indiana, writes, "I always heard my husband speak of his mother with the greatest love and reverence." The President's

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sister, Mrs. Samuel V. Morris, of Oakland, California, wrote the following letter, which throws new light on that delightful home circle, at North Bend:

5515 CARLTON STREET, OAKLAND, CALIF.,  
September the Fifteenth, 1917.

WILLIAM J. HAMPTON, D.D.,  
*My dear Sir:*

Your letter of the tenth came about the time my sister, Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, wrote to me about your wishes. I am sorry I cannot do full justice to the things which could be written of my sainted Mother, but will gladly do what I can. I am now the only daughter living. I have a brother two years younger living in Kansas City. Ben and myself were small children in 1850, when our dear Mother died. I was nearly eight and remember distinctly the sweet christian character of our Mother. Almost too young to realize what her leaving us would mean to her home and family. *This* has come to me more each year of my life since. We had a country home—Point Farm, Hamilton County, Ohio, twenty miles below Cincinnati. We were six miles below the city of Clews, where we attended the Presbyterian church, my Father serving as one of the Elders. We seldom missed attending the morning service. We generally stopped for dinner with Grandma Harrison, who lived at the old North Bend home up the last seven years of her life, when she came to be a member of my Father's family until her death in 1863.

A very pleasant memory of my mother was the evening gatherings in her room each Sunday to hear her read the Bible stories to the younger children.

So it was the *best* things of life came to us through this devoted mother's teachings, and I now add, through our father's also, in the daily family prayers, and grace at the table all having a wonderful influence—I am sorry to say greatly neglected in many homes. Our family was a large one, and several cousins were invited to share in the advantages of a most devoted christian governess, a niece of Rev. Horace Bushnell, of Cincinnati. My brothers brought some college friends home for the vacations, so I have beautiful memories, brothers and sisters—a source of much pleasure in my declining years.

My oldest sister told me of Ben's devotion to his mother, from a small boy, and that *never* left him. As a little fellow when strangers were about Ben was always at his mother's side. It seems a rather strange coincidence, that our mother's birth, marriage and death, should come the same month, and so near together; born August the thirteenth, married the twelfth, and on the fifteenth of August, 1850, she died, only forty years of age. Her death came after only a week's illness. We were most blessed in having two sisters old enough to look after the family and home. My brothers were on their summer's vacation at the time. Ben was the thoughtful brother to look after Brother John only six years old, and myself. I will never forget his tenderness to us at that sad time. Some have said his was a *cold nature*; all I can say to this — *they did not know him*. He told me once he felt the light of our home had gone out in our dear mother's death, but in after years, he came home for change and rest and seemed to enjoy going about the old farm with gun and rod as he had done in his boy-

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hood days. I was his *little* sister, and when he was home on his vacations, we frequently spent hours together; Ben with his head in my lap, reading or dreaming, while I stroked his hair, something he greatly enjoyed. Some children might have considered that a task, to *me* it was a *great pleasure*. A college friend said to him one day, "Ben, you must have a happy home; I, however, have no pleasant memories of my home." Needless to say, that same young man, spent his next summer's vacation with us.

When Brother finished his law course and married, he brought his bride to our home where he spent the winter, going to Indianapolis in the spring, and to housekeeping in a *very modest* little house. My father sent them a fine cow and each fall a generous supply of all the good things from the farm, which I was told Ben was as enthusiastic over, as a child over its Christmas stocking. I am sending a picture of the old home of my mother.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. SAMUEL V. MORRIS.

In some respects it has seemed almost too sacred to turn this letter over to the eyes of the public. With such a delicate touch, this sister has lifted the veil in that Harrison home, where she and brother Ben were chums. What a delightful picture this sister has drawn of that home circle, and what a Christian atmosphere pervaded that home! No one has ever doubted that the father and mother of Benjamin Harrison were Christians. They were stout defenders of that sacred institution — the

*Elizabeth Findley Irwin —Harrison*

Holy Sabbath. They were regular in attendance upon divine service. The father, an honored Elder in the Presbyterian Church, always asked the blessing at the table, and conducted with regularity the family altar. On Sunday evening the mother in that country home would gather her little family about her and read such Bible stories as would interest them. These things made a deep impression on the mind of this little sister, for she was only eight when her mother was translated. Out of such a home came Benjamin Harrison! What a delicate touch from the sister's pen when she tells of the grief that came to the home when this good mother was taken away, and the tender devotion of the oldest brother, Ben, as he tried to make up for the loss in the home through the mother's death! And yet writes this sister, "Some have called his a cold nature." No wonder she adds, "They did not *know him!*"

The reflections of Mrs. Morris have called to our mind the beautiful poem of Elizabeth Akers Allen. As she has drawn aside the curtains of that delightful home of the Harrisons, and has so eloquently told us about the golden memories of childhood, so does Elizabeth Akers Allen in her poem. No more fitting place could be found in this volume, than to add here a few of those sweet verses.



*Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

“ Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!  
I am so weary of toil and of tears, —  
Toil without recompense, — tears all in vain, —  
Take them and give me my childhood again.  
I have grown weary of dust and decay,  
Weary of flinging my soul wealth away,  
Weary of sowing for others to reap,  
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

“ Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,  
Mother, oh, mother, my heart calls for you!  
Many a summer the grass has grown green,  
Blossomed and faded our faces between,  
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,  
Long I tonight for your presence again.  
Come from the silence, so long and so deep,  
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

“ Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,  
Fall on your shoulders again as of old,  
Let it drop over my forehead tonight,  
Shading my faint eyes away from the light, —  
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more  
Happy will throng the sweet visions of yore.  
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep,  
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep!

“ Mother, dear mother, the years have grown long  
Since I last listened to your lullaby song,  
Sing, then, and unto my heart it shall seem,  
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.  
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,  
With your light lashes, just sweeping my face,  
Never, hereafter, to wake or to weep, —  
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep! ”



## NANCY ALLISON — McKINLEY

### WILLIAM McKINLEY

*Twenty-fifth President of the United States, 1897-1901*

**W**ILLIAM McKINLEY'S ancestors in America have fought in every war from the Revolution down. His grandfather, James McKinley, served under General William Henry Harrison in the famous battle of Tippecanoe and in the War of 1812. In 1827 his son, William McKinley, then twenty-two years of age, wooed and won Miss Nancy Allison, daughter of a farmer residing at New Lisbon, Ohio. The Allison ancestry was of good old Scotch Covenanter stock, having strong religious convictions. They suffered imprisonment in the lowlands of Scotland for conscience sake, coming to America in search of religious freedom. On January 29, 1843, a baby was born in the modest McKinley home at Niles, Ohio, and was named William for his father.

Nancy Allison McKinley was the mother of nine children, four boys and five girls, and there was no black sheep among them. Her home is thus described by the Hon. John Hay, a devoted friend of the family: "He (William McKinley) was born into that way of life which is elsewhere called the middle class, but which in this country is so nearly

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universal as to make of other classes an almost negligible quantity. He was neither rich nor poor, neither proud nor humble; his parents were sober, God-fearing people, intelligent and upright, and without pretensions. He grew up in the company of boys like himself, wholesome, honest, and self-reliant. They looked down on nobody; they even felt it impossible that they could be looked down upon. These homes were homes of probity, piety, and patriotism." Every night after the evening meal, when the outside work was done, the family would gather together and some member read aloud for an hour, the others listening and enjoying what was read. This hour, thus spent, furnished an immense amount of information for all. This was a standing rule in the McKinley home. It was not compulsory, but nobody wanted to miss that golden hour of privilege, and it was kept almost religiously by the different members of the family. William McKinley, senior, was absent from home much of the time on account of his business, generally returning to spend the week end with his family. Thus the training and care and education of the children devolved almost wholly upon the mother. She possessed a strong, rugged, positive character. Her old neighbors at Niles say of her that she was known as a peacemaker, and was always doing some kind, good act, ministering to the sick, helping the poor and needy and doing other Christian work. "It was a humble home," says Professor W. C.

## *Nancy Allison — McKinley*

Campbell, principal of the public schools of Niles, Ohio, "presided over by a heroic mother, who managed, by hard work, economy and good sense, to make the slender income of the father meet the necessities of a large family. A home, no doubt, in which each child had his own duties to perform, and it may be surmised that the household tasks, though vigorously insisted upon, were never thought too irksome, for the children without exception loved their mother devotedly." Out of that sort of home came the young man who, when admitted to the Bar, promised his mother that he would never take a case when convinced in his own mind that the would-be client was guilty; and he never did.

McKinley's parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They attended regularly the Sabbath services, the midweek prayer-meeting, the class meeting, and their children were always at their place in Sunday School. Former President William Howard Taft has said that "McKinley's father was an active-minded, high-principled member of the community, not highly educated, but familiar with the Bible, Shakespeare and Dante. His mother had the elements of leadership. She, with her sister, ran the church and did everything to widen its influence and control." William McKinley resembled his mother in face, manner and mental peculiarities, and his religious inspirations were largely derived from her. He never forgot the prayers he learned at his mother's knee.

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His religious convictions were so strong that the family thought he would enter the ministry. His mother said, "William is a good boy. Some day he may become a Bishop. He is always clever at talking." Indeed, had he chosen the ministry, those same fine qualities of leadership which placed him in the front rank of statesmen would no doubt have given him a place among the chief pastors of the church.

William McKinley was converted when a boy fourteen years of age. He grew up in the Sunday School, and while his parents were living at Poland, Ohio, he attended evangelistic services in the Methodist Episcopal Church, conducted by the pastor, Rev. Aaron D. Morton. Mr. Morton said, "I remember the evening well. The congregation that night was small, although prior to that night there had been many largely attended meetings. William McKinley had been present at all of them. That evening he sat about the middle of the church. At my request for those to stand who wished to express a desire to become Christians, he arose, and calmly said, 'I have not done my duty; I have sinned; I want to be a Christian; I believe religion to be the best thing in all the world. I give myself to the Saviour who has done so much for me.' A few evenings afterward he said, 'I have found the pearl of great price.' " At twenty-four he was superintendent of the Sunday School. William McKinley is the only President who was a life-long Methodist.

## *Nancy Allison — McKinley*

No one could possibly be more devoted to his mother than William McKinley. He has left behind, so far as we know, no public tribute; but the world really needs none, for it is a matter of public knowledge. His life spoke volumes. This was, no doubt, the thought in the mind of the President's sister, Miss Helen McKinley, when among other things she wrote the author as follows:

“William McKinley's heart went out in such love, and so much deep affection, for his saintly mother, that incidents are unessential, in proof of his attention to, and adoration for her.”

Nancy Allison McKinley was one of the best of mothers. Kind and loving, but firm on occasion, she brought her son up to be a sober, upright, God-fearing Christian man. To his pastor, Dr. C. E. Manchester, he frequently said, “My mother is a good woman,” and then would quote the words of Mr. Lincoln, “All that I am I owe to my mother.” He never grew away from her. When at his home in Canton, Ohio, he visited her daily, and when absent either wrote to her or sent her a telegram. This he continued to do during his politically active life,—when Governor of Ohio, when representing his state in Congress at Washington, as well as when President.

He inherited from his mother his strong religious convictions and love for the truth and the church. A committee consisting of Bishops Bowman and



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Hurst, Doctors Upham and Buckley and General Rusling called at the White House November 21, 1899, representing the General Missionary Committee which was holding its sessions in Washington. Before the committee withdrew, the President said, "Before we part I just want to say to you that whatever men may think about me, or not think, I am a Methodist, and nothing but a Methodist,—a Christian, and nothing but a Christian. When I was but a little child my dear old mother used to take me to the Methodist prayer-meeting and class-meeting. When I grew older I joined the Methodist Church and Sunday School, and then became a Sunday-School teacher and afterward a Sunday-School superintendent and a member of the Epworth League." Pausing briefly, he resumed by saying with much feeling, "And by the blessings of heaven I mean to live and die, please God, in the faith of my mother." William McKinley cherished his mother with a devotion that was well-nigh sacred. One of the most familiar sights in his home city was that of Mr. McKinley escorting his mother to church, or walking down the aisle of the church to the communion altar with her. When governor of Ohio, he would quietly slip out of the capital and go over to Canton, and on Sunday morning walk to church with his aged mother. After he became President of the United States, when in Canton over the Sabbath, he maintained his usual custom.

The face of Mother McKinley in her later life was



*Nancy Allison — McKinley*

“ that of a sweet old lady. Curls clustered about her face; her eyes were full of twinkles; her lips half hid the smile that lingered there; her head was adorned with a lace cap, and her whole appearance was that of a kind, alert, motherly woman. Her loving cheer never abated. It was as if the sunlight of heaven played upon her soul and kept it warm and bright.” Her pastor said to her once, “ I hope the way grows brighter as you near the heavenly home,” and she answered, “ Oh, I don’t know. It has been bright all the way.”

On the day Mr. McKinley was nominated by the Republicans for the high office of President, he was at his home in Canton, Ohio. He had not been sent as a delegate. He was anxious that his mother should be present when news of the proceedings came over the wires from St. Louis. June 18, 1896, was an ideal summer day. The air was flooded with golden sunlight. Major McKinley was seated in an easy chair on the veranda soon to become famous. Some ladies were approaching and he arose to greet them. He quickly asked, “ Is mother coming? ” “ Yes,” was the response, “ she will be here soon.” At one o’clock in the afternoon she arrived with her two daughters, and Major McKinley was happy. His mother had come. Soon news came flashing over the wires announcing his nomination on the first ballot. The grand old mother arose, walked over to the side of her son, and, throwing her arms around his neck, her eyes suffused with tears, but

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brighter than smiles, she whispered in his ear words so holy that no one has ever known what she said,—but the son only for whom they were intended. Mrs. McKinley was eighty-six when her son was nominated for the presidency. She was asked if she were not proud to be the mother of such a son, and she replied, “No, I am thankful to the Great Giver that he has bestowed upon me such a blessing.” On November 6, 1896, Major McKinley was elected President, and Nancy Allison McKinley, the farmer’s daughter, became the mother of a President. When he took the oath of office as President, the fond old mother was a proud observer, and as she saw the thousands of his fellow-countrymen congratulating and applauding him, she said simply, “William has always been a good boy. He never gave me a cross word, and I do not believe he ever told me a lie. I am glad that he is President for his sake.” This tribute as to his truth-telling has never been charged up to the account of myths and fables, as in the case of George Washington.

Eight weeks before her death, the President, while on a brief vacation, spent a Sabbath in Canton. On Sunday morning he escorted his mother to church for the last time. Together they sat in the pew which had been their accustomed place for so long a time. Not long after she was seized with a fatal illness. The President at the time was overburdened with cares of office growing out of the Spanish-American War. A special wire connected the White

## *Nancy Allison — McKinley*

House with the little home of Mother McKinley. The sick mother tossed on her bed, longing to see her son, and said, "I wish William were here. Surely you have not told him how sick I am, or he would be here." One night the message was wired to him, "Mr. President, we think you had better come," and back came the answer, "Tell mother I'll be there." A special train stood in waiting with steam up; the tracks were cleared and soon the President was rushing across the country. Arriving at Canton, a team of thoroughbreds waited at the station, and over the streets the horses dashed to the house that sheltered the sick mother. Soon he was at the door, and a moment later she was in her son's embrace. She returned his greeting with the words, "O William, I knew you would come!" She passed away on Sunday afternoon, December 12, 1897, after a lingering illness. The President sat by her side when she had breathed her last, silent, eyes filled with tears. For one hour he sat thus and gazed upon the silent form of the mother to whom he was so tenderly devoted. At the funeral, the thirty pastors of Canton had been invited to be present. The service was in charge of Rev. C. E. Manchester. He said: "It was of such as she, the Wise Man spoke when he said, 'The heart of husband doth safely trust her. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and

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in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.' It is worth all the cost of trial and sorrow to be worthy of such divine portraiture as this. Her motherhood was the crowning glory of her days. She was by divine right the gentle mistress of her own home. Her heart throbbed with tenderest care for those whom God had given her, and her children do rise up and call her blessed."

President McKinley lies buried beside his mother. Bishop Fowler's words come to us almost akin to a benediction: "A son, loving and thoughtful, and obedient, he secured the blessings of a happy mother, and the blessings of Almighty God. History will never forget the name of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; nor of Aurelia, mother of Cæsar; nor of Mary, mother of Washington; nor of Nancy Hanks, mother of Lincoln; nor of Nancy, mother of McKinley."

## MARTHA BULLOCK — ROOSEVELT

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

*Twenty-sixth President of the United States, 1901-1909*

**T**HEODORE ROOSEVELT, the father of the Theodore Roosevelt who became President of the United States and whose name has become a household word in America, was born in New York City, September 22, 1831. He was a prominent and successful merchant in the American metropolis. He was a staunch patriot, and during the Civil War he was largely instrumental in helping to raise and equip a regiment of troops. He was influential in the organization of the Sanitary Commission which did so much to bring comfort to the soldiers. In his own home there was later organized the Soldiers' Employment Bureau. These activities along patriotic lines clearly reveal the character of Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. He was first, last and all the time a friend of the soldier.

The wife of this sturdy patriot was Martha Bullock, who, though born in Hartford, Connecticut, July 8, 1834, was by rights a product of the South, and represented the best blood and tradition of the Southern tier of states. Her father was Major James Stevenson Bullock of Georgia. The Bullocks



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were of Scotch ancestry — that name has been known in Scotland for four hundred years. A distinguished ancestor of Martha Bullock was a delegate to the Continental Congress of 1775 and 1776, so that on the mother's side the ancestry of President Roosevelt runs parallel to the history of our nation.

How did Theodore Roosevelt of New York City become acquainted with Miss Martha Bullock of Roswell, Georgia? The story is interesting. Mr. Roosevelt had a friend living in Philadelphia who was engaged to marry a Georgia girl. His friend invited him to accompany him to the South to serve as his groomsman at the wedding, little dreaming of the outcome of that invitation, that was to result in the North and the South uniting to produce a son that was to grace the presidential chair at Washington. That Southern home where young Roosevelt went to serve as groomsman at his friend's wedding had two charming Southern girls — the one, the bride of his friend; the other, her sister, Miss Martha Bullock. At the wedding Mr. Roosevelt and Miss Bullock met for the first time. It seemed to have been a case of love at first sight, for in twelve months he journeyed South again, this time to attend his own wedding and to claim Martha Bullock as his bride. He brought his wife to his home in the North, but though destined to live here the balance of her life, she never forgot that she was a daughter of the South, and her sympathies were



## Martha Bullock — Roosevelt

with the Southern people all her life. She died February 12, 1884, when but fifty years of age, her husband having preceded her to the grave six years before, February 9, 1878.

Martha Bullock Roosevelt had two brothers who were officers in the Confederate navy; one brother, Captain Irwin S. Bullock, fired the last two shots from the *Alabama* before she went down under the fire of the *Kearsarge*. Another brother, James D. Bullock, was an admiral in the Confederate navy. Mrs. Roosevelt was as devoted to the cause of the South as her two brothers were. It is said she displayed a Confederate flag in New York during the days of the war, and when on a visit to the South, in her animated style, told how she did it. In honor of some big social function that was going on, her home was gorgeously decorated with the Stars and Stripes, but from her own bedroom window she flung to the breeze the Stars and Bars. A crowd at once gathered. They threatened to tear it down, but Mr. Roosevelt had sufficient influence on the crowd to persuade them to allow the flag to remain out of respect to his wife's feelings.

Two years before the breaking out of the Civil War, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., was born. The place of his birth was 28 East Twentieth Street, New York City. He was born to a life of ease and luxury. If ever one was born with a gold spoon in his mouth, it was he. He was reared in a rich man's home, and the first city-born boy to reach the presidency, all

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of his predecessors having been village or country born. The family physician wrote in his notebook. "Theodore Roosevelt, a bright, precocious boy, age twelve,—he ought to make his mark but for the fact that he has a rich father." Through choice, this rich man's son became one of the most prodigious workers this country has produced, and during his busy life, crowded as it was with a multiplicity of duties, he became the eloquent advocate of the strenuous life.

We hear much of self-made men. Theodore Roosevelt had a weak constitution, and in early childhood a delicate frame. The manner in which he transformed that frame into a sinewy, athletic form reads almost like a fable. He did it by the most strenuous exercise, by roughing it on the ranch, in the hunting field, in bouts with boxers, fencers and wrestlers, until he became capable of enduring the most terrific strain. He had an impediment in his speech, but he overcame that and became a most fluent speaker, holding from the beginning of an address until its close his hearers, through the effectiveness and power of his oratory.

Young Theodore had the advantages of a finished education. He graduated from Harvard University—the first President to be graduated from Harvard since John Quincy Adams. Shortly after quitting college he began his marvelous career of usefulness as a public servant. How he was able to crowd in so much in a comparatively brief life is a marvel.

The product of his pen is sufficient to have occupied the full time of many an author. The wide range of subjects discussed shows evidence of the depth of his culture. Aside from authorship, his public services are remarkable; his career, not so much a climb as a flight. His father died when he was nineteen years of age, and he was only twenty-five when his mother died. Without parental restraint or counsel and with wealth at his command, his career might have been everything other than it was. He had in him that which constitutes strength of character. At the close of his college career he entered public life. When twenty-three he was elected a member of the Assembly of New York. He served with distinction in rapid succession as civil service commissioner, police commissioner of New York City, assistant secretary of the navy, and resigned when the Spanish-American War began, serving as lieutenant-colonel of the Rough Riders. At the close of the war he returned to America and was acclaimed a popular hero, and on the wave of that popularity was swept into the office of governor of New York. In 1900 he was elected Vice-President of the United States. The assassination of Mr. McKinley in the seventh month of his second term made Mr. Roosevelt President of the United States at forty-three. He was elected President, November 8, 1904, serving the country as chief executive for over seven years.

Theodore Roosevelt was reared in a Christian

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home. His father, according to the President's autobiography, had family prayers every morning, and the three children, Theodore, Elliott and their sister Corinne, would sit with their father on the sofa while he conducted family worship, two on one side and one on the other. The coveted place was the "cubby-hole," which was the space between the father and the arm of the sofa. But his mother was a godly woman. As she trained the son who was destined to become President of the United States, she was careful to develop in him a feeling of reverence for holy things and a sense of right and justice. No one doubts that she succeeded in both.

Just prior to his entering College, when 17 years of age he came to Dr. Ludlow, the pastor of his parents and said, "Doctor, I'm thoroughly convinced that your doctrines are true, and I feel that I ought to say so. May I come into your church?" And thus began the Christian life of Theodore Roosevelt. During the entire four years he was attending Harvard he taught a Sunday-School class, first in an Episcopal Sunday School and later in a Congregational Sunday School. Throughout his life he was a consistent member and regular attendant upon the services of the Dutch Reformed Church. He believed with all his soul in the church, and by voice and pen used his influence to promote its interests. He gives nine cogent reasons for church attendance, which we believe should be preserved:

*Martha Bullock — Roosevelt*

1. In this actual world, a churchless community, a community where boys have abandoned and scoffed at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on the rapid down grade.

2. Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others.

3. There are enough holidays for most of us. Sundays differ from other holidays—in fact there are fifty-two of them in every year. Therefore on Sundays go to Church.

4. Yes, I know all the excuses. I know that one can worship the Creator in a grove of trees, or by a running brook, or in a man's own house just as well as in Church. But I also know as a matter of cold fact, the average boy does not so worship.

5. He may not hear a good sermon at Church. He will hear a sermon by a good man who, with his good wife, is engaged all the week in making hard lives a little easier.

6. He will listen to and take part in reading some beautiful passages from the Bible, and if he is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss.

7. He will take part in singing some good hymns.

8. He will meet and nod or speak to good, quiet neighbors. He will come away feeling a little more charitably toward all the world, even toward those excessively foolish young men who regard Church-going as a soft performance.

9. I advocate a boy's joining in Church work for the sake of showing his faith by his works.

Dr. Ferdinand C. Iglehart, in his recently published work on Theodore Roosevelt, has this to say con-



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cerning his religious life: "One of the most profoundly religious men this nation or any other has ever produced was Theodore Roosevelt. He was a powerful believer, and a prodigious religious actor. Mr. Roosevelt had religion down to perfection in the most simple and sincere faith in the cardinal doctrines of our religion, and he practiced it most vigorously." When Dr. Iglehart told him that his son was about to start as a missionary to Japan, after a hearty "God bless him and bless you," he said:

I have told you so many times that I consider the Christian ministry as the highest calling in the world, most intimately related to the most exalted life and service here and destiny beyond, and I consider it my greatest joy and glory that, occupying a most exalted position in the Nation, I am enabled simply and sincerely, to preach the practical moralities of the Bible to my fellow-countrymen and to hold up Christ as the hope and Savior of the world. I believe down deep in my soul, as you know, my friend, that I have preached the same gospel that you and your boy are called to preach.

As high an estimate as I have of the ministry, I consider that the climax of that calling is to go out in missionary service, as your son is doing. It takes mighty good stuff to be a missionary of the right type, the best stuff there is in this world. It takes a deal of courage to break the shell and go twelve thousand miles away to risk an unfriendly climate, to master a foreign language, perhaps the most difficult one on earth to learn; to adopt strange customs, to turn aside from earthly fame and emolu-



*Martha Bullock — Roosevelt*

ment and most of all, to say good-bye to home and the faces of the loved ones virtually forever.

Dr. Iglehart mentioned an incident which illustrated the President's broad catholicity. While at the White House one day, the President introduced him to another gentleman: "Dr. Iglehart, I want to introduce you to Father ———, who has been doing very important work among the Indians and has come to talk with me about it." Seating himself between us he said, "Here's the great Catholic Church, with its millions, represented by this Catholic priest, on one side of me, and here on the other is the great Methodist Church, with its millions, represented by my old friend, and I am only a poor little Dutch Reformed layman between the two." "No, Mr. President," said Dr. Iglehart, "You are not the poor little Dutch Reformed layman between them. You are the great head of the nation and a Christian with a universal heart. You are large enough to belong to all the churches, and all of us claim you as such, and we have reason to believe that you consider that all of us belong to you." The President answered, "You are quite right. I have the profoundest respect and warmest affection for all denominations, Protestant, Catholic and Hebrew."

Mr. Roosevelt wrote this message at the request of the New York Bible Society, to be printed in a special edition of the New Testament designed for our soldiers and sailors.

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The teachings of the New Testament are foreshadowed in Micah's verse, "What more doth the Lord require of thee, than to do justice and to love mercy and walk humbly with thy God?"

"Do justice" and therefore fight valiantly against the armies of Germany and Turkey, for these nations in this crisis stand for the reign of Moloch and Beelzebub on this earth.

"Love mercy"; treat prisoners well; succor the wounded; treat every woman as if she were your sister, care for the little children, and be tender with the old and helpless.

"Walk humbly"; you will do so if you study the life and teachings of the Saviour.

May the God of Justice and Mercy have you in His keeping.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

In his Autobiography published in 1913, he paints this beautiful word picture of his mother:

My mother, Martha Bullock, was a sweet, gracious, beautiful Southern woman, a delightful companion, and beloved by everybody. She was entirely unreconstructed to the day of her death. Her mother, my grandmother, one of the dearest old ladies, lived with us, and was distinctly over-indulgent to us children, being quite unable to harden her heart toward us, even when occasion demanded it. Toward the close of the Civil War, although a very small boy, I grew to have a partial but alert understanding of the fact that the family were not one in their views about the conflict, my father being a strong Lincoln Republican; and once when I felt that I had been wronged by mater-

*Martha Bullock — Roosevelt*

nal discipline during the day, I attempted a practical vengeance by praying with loud fervor for the success of the Union arms when we all came to say our prayers before my mother in the evening. She was not only a most devoted mother, but was also blessed with a strong sense of humor, and she was too much amused to punish me. But I was warned not to repeat the offense, under penalty of my father being informed, — he being the dispenser of serious punishment."

In these words President Roosevelt not only pays a charming tribute to his mother, but in a humorous way he describes what he had thus early discovered to be a dominant note in the mind of his mother, and this combination of humor, grace and wit, his sister writes, he inherited from his mother. No one is better qualified to write or speak concerning such qualities, and the devotion of son for mother, than a sister who has shared the sheltered seclusion of the home life. Accordingly, we append the following letter from Mrs. Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, the President's sister.

147 EAST 61st STREET, NEW YORK,  
Nov. 29, 1920.

REV. DR. WILLIAM J. HAMPTON,  
213 Heberton Avenue,  
Port Richmond, N. Y.

*My dear Doctor:*

I am glad to tell you that my brother's devotion to his mother was of a specially tender kind. Her two sons, (I had a brother Elliott eighteen months

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younger than the President, who died when he was thirty-three), used to pick her up in their arms and carry her up stairs as if she had been a baby, and they always said she was like a lovely Dresden china object of art. My brother Theodore delighted in the combination of wit, grace and gentleness, which she possessed to an unusual degree. Very truly,

CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON.

In 1905, President Roosevelt paid a visit to the girlhood home of his mother at Roswell, Georgia. In an address to the people of that place, he described how his mother had made him familiar with the place, so that they seemed to him as neighbors long known. He said:

It has been my very great fortune to have the right to claim that my blood is half Southern and half Northern, and I would deny the right of any man here to feel greater pride in the deeds of every Southerner than I feel. Of the children, the brothers and sisters of my mother, who were born and brought up in that house on the hill there, my two uncles afterward entered the Confederate Navy. One of the younger men served on the *Alabama* as the youngest officer aboard her. He was captain of one of her two broadside thirty-two pounders in her final fight, and when at the very end the *Alabama* was sinking and the *Kearsarge* passed under her stern and came along the side that had not been engaged hitherto, my uncle, Irwin Bullock, shifted his gun from one side to the other and fired the last two shots from the *Alabama*. James Dunwoody Bullock was an Admiral in the Confederate service.

## *Martha Bullock — Roosevelt*

Of all people whom I have ever met, he was the one that came nearest to that beautiful creation of Thackeray — Col. Newcome.

President Roosevelt always spoke in the highest terms of the South, and resented the idea of their being called traitors. He could appeal as no President before him had been able to do, with the exception of Cleveland, since the Civil War, to all sections of the country. He loved the North, but he was as equally devoted to the South that gave him his mother.

When the war involved America, Theodore Roosevelt offered his services to his country. Two hundred thousand men volunteered to serve under his command. Senator Warren G. Harding introduced a resolution in the Senate authorizing him to lead an American division to France. But his political opponents seemingly thought he wished to make political capital, and he was turned down. Colonel Roosevelt was deeply disappointed. But while he could not go himself, he sent his representatives to the front. His four sons volunteered their services. In fact, his entire family was engaged in patriotic service.

His daughter, Alice Lee Roosevelt, had married Hon. Nicholas Longworth, and he was serving his country as a member of Congress.

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., was a lieutenant-colonel in the American Expeditionary Force; was gassed and wounded.



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Kermit was a captain serving, in Mesopotamia.

Ethel married Dr. Richard Derby, a lieutenant-colonel in the Medical Corps.

Archibald was a captain and was wounded in battle.

Quentin was an officer in the Aviation Corps, was gassed and wounded, and finally fell, fighting, as his father expressed it, "like an eagle in the air," high over the German lines, and was buried on the battlefield.

Theodore Roosevelt, though not permitted to go to the Western battle front, passed through many a fiery ordeal which undoubtedly hastened his death. When he died the country was stunned. If he had faults, they were quickly forgotten. His great outstanding virtues stood out in bold grandeur. America wept, and the nations of the world were moved.

"Farewell, mighty hunter! You were the swiftest, cleanest and most valorous of your tribe. You pressed the hunt fearlessly and to its logical ends, not in fantasy through the clouds, but in fact on this earth, where the consequences are. Innumerable and precious are the trophies. We place them at your side. Would that there were demons of doubt and darkness and unrighteousness in the path you are now on. For you would slay them all, and like it more.

"Farewell, O rare American!"



## LOUISE M. TORREY — TAFT

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

*Twenty-seventh President of the United States,  
1909-1913*

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT'S ancestors on his father's side go back through six New England generations in a direct line to Robert Taft, who settled in Mendon, Massachusetts, in 1660. His mother was a Torrey, and on the maternal side we have another unbroken line reaching back to William Torrey, who settled in Massachusetts in 1640. Where is there another American family with an ancestry on both sides dating back to the middle of the seventeenth century? William Howard Taft is an American through inheritance, if ever one were. Ancestry, we are told, furnishes the metal, and the home the mould. The Tafts have an ancestry worth while, and nothing was lacking in the home. Charles Francis Adams says, "The domestic hearth is the first of schools, and the best of lecture rooms; for there the heart will co-operate with the mind, the affections with the reasoning powers. The home is the scene for the almost exclusive sway of the weaker sex."

The Tafts, like the Adamses, have placed great stress on a trained mind through the channel of the

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best schools. Harvard University registered thirteen students by the name of Taft prior to 1905; Brown University, twenty-six; Dartmouth, five; Michigan University, four; and Yale is honored in having had Judge Alphonso Taft, and his more distinguished son, William Howard Taft, as graduates, the latter graduating in 1878.

A biographer of William Howard Taft writes, "Like father — like son." It would be difficult to conceive how that could be more strikingly true than in the case of Judge Alphonso Taft and his son, William Howard. The father earned the money to meet his college expenses by teaching school. The same persistency of the father to thus fight his way through school in the face of difficulties is exhibited in the bulldog persistency of the son in all the years of noble, patriotic service. Whatever he began he finished. Alphonso became a famous lawyer, so did his son. He became a member of President Grant's cabinet, serving first as secretary of war, and later as attorney-general; the son served in the cabinet of President Roosevelt as secretary of war. When he became secretary of war, as he entered his department he saw hung on the wall a portrait in oil of his father, who had previously held the position he was taking up. Judge Taft later served his country as minister to Austria, and Russia, and the distinguished son served as governor of the Philippines and later as the President of the United States. To the many

## *Louise M. Torrey — Taft*

thousands who have known William Howard Taft, and grasped his genial hand, and heard his hearty laugh, he is plain "Bill" Taft; that he has the right to place "Honorable" before his name, in view of the many important offices he has held, admits of no doubt.

Louise M. Torrey, the daughter of Samuel D. Torrey, of Millbury, Massachusetts, was born September the eleventh, 1827, and on December the twenty-sixth, 1853, she was married to Alphonso Taft. By this union there were born four sons and one daughter. Mrs. Taft was a New England woman of strong character, excellent family, and much ability. She possessed considerable literary talent and has made an exhaustive study, not only of the genealogy of the Torrey family, but also of the Taft family. William Howard Taft, their distinguished son, strikingly illustrates the fact "that blood does tell." Both parents were endowed with fine intellectual gifts. From his mother's side of the family, William Howard inherits his large physique. The fifth William Torrey in line of descent was reputed to have been six feet seven inches in height.

While Mr. Taft has reproduced many of the high qualities of his father, he is also greatly indebted to his mother. Louise M. Torrey was of Puritan stock, but with broad liberal views of life and lofty ideals, holding to the liberal views of the Unitarian Church. Mr. Taft is also a prominent Unitarian, and his

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views are broad and liberal. This was particularly emphasized by many of his official acts during his presidency. Owing to Mrs. Taft's dignity, quiet self-respect, and independence of character, she was always an element to be reckoned with in any community wherever her lot was cast.

Throughout her long life she had interested herself in the welfare and success of her son. His success in public life was to her an especial source of joy and delight. Mr. Taft visited his mother as frequently as possible, and never neglected her through failure to correspond with her, and their correspondence was always of a confidential nature. Frequently they would converse with each other about the onerous tasks he had been called upon to perform. She was particularly interested in his work in the Philippines, and approved of his entire course of action in dealing with them. She never doubted for a moment, because of his genial ways, his high sense of justice and fair dealing, his ability to win over the suspicious inhabitants of the far-distant lands.

She also approved of the sacrifice he was making from a political standpoint, in order to minister to them. That Judge Taft has been a most unselfish public official, has scarcely ever been questioned; and in all this his mother was in perfect agreement with him. When it was mooted about his going to the Philippines, the President and the secretary of war, Mr. Root, put the matter up squarely to him.

*Louise M. Torrey — Taft*

Mr. Root said: "Judge, we need you in the Philippines. You are now confronted with two propositions,—one easy, the other, hard. You are now occupying an honorable position on the federal bench, with a prospect in the not far-distant future of reaching a seat on the Supreme Court Bench, the goal of every lawyer's ambition who puts reputation above dollars. You have money enough with your salary to live comfortably. You can remain on the Supreme Court Bench for life. That is the easy proposition.

"On the other hand, we need you in the Philippines. You may be prostrated, and wrecked physically by the diseases incident to the climate. You may die at your post. You have the opportunity of being the saviour of the little brown men, advancing them centuries to civilization, and still be damned by the public for your work. You may administer affairs with great success, and still feel the sting of ingratitude.

"You will have to resign your Circuit Judgeship. The chance of going on the Supreme Court Bench may never again come to you. That is the hard proposition. Which will you accept?"

His old college mates, who had seen "Bill" Taft take hard knocks, would have been ready to give his answer, which was, "I go to the Philippines." When the Supreme Court Judgeship was offered to him by President Roosevelt, so many petitions came to the President from the Philippines, that Mr.



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Taft, "who was completely wrapped up in his work in the Philippines, but whose ambition at that time was to round out his career on the Supreme Court Bench, made a supreme sacrifice again in favor of the Filipinos."

While in the Philippines, he introduced among the natives what was to be known as the glad hand. The natives were accustomed to Spanish dignity and reserve. Mr. Taft left a democracy that would have delighted the most enthusiastic spellbinder.

When he went into the Province of Bulacan, to inaugurate a local civil government, he inquired for the most prominent citizen of the place. Senator José Serapio, an ex-captain of Spanish Volunteers and President of Malolos, was produced. The gallant captain was stiff with dignity. A dozen gaudy decorations adorned his uniform coat. He was prepared for some grand ceremony. Every one expected to see the new governor-general appear in striking court costume, with the blazonry of military pomp. They did not know democratic William Howard Taft. Instead, he appeared in a suit of light linen, and when presented to their foremost citizen, he grabbed the little fellow's hand, and said heartily, "How d'ye do. Glad to see you," with a chuckle that startled the foremost citizen almost out of his wits.

Mr. Taft had returned to America, but he had promised the Filipinos that when they opened their first Assembly, he would return and be present,



and preside at the formal opening. He was the man who had given the Assembly to them, and now their ideals were to be realized. But would he return? As the time approached for the opening of the Assembly, his mother's health began rapidly to fail. He feared, should he go, she would not survive his return. He wanted to postpone his journey, believing he could explain satisfactorily to them his absence, but his mother would not consent. She told him his first duty now was to the people whom he had befriended, and not to her. Her desire that he should go, we are told, had almost the force of a command.

But there was another reason of a compelling nature that would have kept a more selfish politician in America just at that time. Mr. Taft was becoming more and more the popular candidate for President by the Republican party. During his absence abroad a lull might occur in the popularity of his candidacy. Some of his friends regretted his determination to go. It was urged that he should remain in the country at so critical a juncture, when his re-nomination seemed so apparent. But they failed to swerve the secretary from his course. He regarded himself as peculiarly responsible for the Filipinos. But, no doubt, a mighty factor that contributed toward registering his final decision was the expressed desire of his mother that he should go and fulfill his promise to them. Some have inclined to the theory that the reason why his mother was

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so insistent that he should make his journey to the Philippines at once, and not postpone it to a later date, was because such postponement would bring his absence from the country still nearer the time of the gathering of the leaders of the Republican party, and might further jeopardize his political interests. Had Mrs. Taft been governed by such reasons, they would have been purely selfish. However much Mrs. Taft was pleased with the ever-increasing interest of the people of America in the candidacy of her son for President, to her mind his paramount duty was to fulfill his promise made to the Filipinos. Though accustomed to sacrifice and hard knocks in the performance of public duties, as we have seen Mr. Taft to have been, still now he might be required to make this one supreme sacrifice of forfeiting the prospect of becoming his party's candidate for the presidency, through absence from home at a critical juncture.

Did Mrs. Taft want her distinguished son to become President of the United States? It surely was not her first choice if we may judge by her own words. Her ambitions for him were of another character. She said: "I do not want my son to be President. He is not my candidate. A place on the Supreme Bench, where my boy would administer justice, is my ambition for him. His is a judicial mind, and he loves the law. Added to these qualities, he has good health and an unfailing good nature. To be President would entail a heavy re-

sponsibility, and the position is a very trying one. He has not sought to be a candidate; it has been thrust upon him. I know that he does not want it, and that his views are the same as mine."

Mr. Taft sailed for the Philippines in September, 1907, and assisted in opening the first Filipino Assembly. He returned by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway. His mother passed away while he was en route from Hamburg to New York, December the seventh, 1907, aged eighty years. His farewell to his mother was similar to that of George Washington, when he turned aside to bid his mother a last farewell while on his way to New York to be inaugurated President of the United States. Washington felt that he would see his mother's face no more. Both left their mother's presence, going forth to perform the high and important tasks that the state had imposed upon them.

Mrs. Taft spent the last years of her life in compiling the New England history of the Taft family—and of her own, the Torrey family, from genealogical data secured by her husband, Judge Taft. This history, together with eulogies of her husband, father and mother, and reference to her son, the then secretary of war, which reveal her just pride in him, has been published in a genealogical history of Worcester County, Massachusetts. Her tribute, in part, to William Howard Taft, is as follows: "The fact that Secretary Taft, throughout his long and honorable public career, has received promotion

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continually, is ample evidence of his capability and reliability, and of the sterling integrity of his character. In October, 1906, he was sent to Cuba by President Roosevelt to direct in the restoration of order, and discharged the delicate duties with signal sagacity and success." Would that this estimable woman, so justly proud of her distinguished son, might have lived to have seen him crowned with the highest honors in the gift of the American people as the President of the United States!

When Mr. Taft retired from the presidency, he had given thirty-two years of public service to his country. In 1880, he was admitted to the Bar in Ohio, to practice law. His long public career at once began. One year later, when only twenty-three, he was serving as assistant prosecuting attorney of Hamilton County, Ohio. He has served as Judge of the Superior Court of Ohio, and as Judge of the Federal Circuit Court in the same state. The list of his public services includes the positions of collector of internal revenue, solicitor-general of the United States, governor-general of the Philippines, secretary of war, and President of the United States. To this high office he was elected November the fifth, 1908, the candidate of the Republican party. On March the fourth, 1909, he was inaugurated the twenty-seventh President of the United States, serving until March the fourth, 1913. In June, 1912, he was re-nominated at the Republican National Convention held at Chicago, but failed of

*Louise M. Torrey — Taft*

election owing to a rupture in the Republican party. He took his defeat gracefully, and retired to private life without a trace of ill-feeling. No man who has served his country as chief executive, and again assumed the duties of a private citizen, has conducted himself with a more becoming dignity, and exhibited a greater usefulness to his country than Mr. Taft. He has furnished a concrete example of what a former President can be, and what he can do. Mr. Taft at once began his duties as Kent Professor of Law in Yale University, to which chair he had been elected. During the progress of the World War his influence was felt far and wide, as he used his voice and pen in the interests of a pure Americanism, and a World Democracy.

Years before, his mother had expressed a preference for a position on the Supreme Court Bench for her already distinguished son. She had even declared this preference at a time when it had become apparent that he would become the successful candidate of the Republican party for the presidency. "His is a judicial mind," she said, "and he loves law." She did not live to see him elected to the presidency; she could not follow him during the years of his fine patriotic service which he rendered his country as a private citizen, after his term of office had expired. But the fond hopes of the mother were to be realized after her death. On June the thirtieth, 1921, President Warren G. Harding nominated former President William Howard Taft as Chief Justice of



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the Supreme Court of the United States, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Edward Douglass White, who had been appointed to the Supreme Court Bench in 1910, while Mr. Taft was serving as the President of the United States. The Senate, in executive session, at once confirmed the nomination. At this appointment, there was general satisfaction all over the country, for everyone conceded that no man was better qualified to fill that high office than he. Mr. Taft is the first man in the history of this nation to be chosen for the highest office in both the executive and judicial branches of the government. Upon receiving notice of his appointment, and confirmation, the former President, who was in Montreal at the time, issued the following statement: "I have received telegrams announcing that the President has nominated me to be the Chief Justice of the United States, and that the Senate has at once confirmed the nomination. I am profoundly grateful to the President for the confidence he has thus shown that I can discharge the important duties of the exalted office. I sincerely hope and pray that I may be able to show that his confidence has not been misplaced. I highly appreciate the immediate confirmation by the Senate. It has been the ambition of my life to be the Chief Justice, but now that it is gratified, I tremble to think whether I can worthily fill the position and be useful to my country." While reading these words, coming, as we believe they did,



*Louise M. Torrey — Taft*

from the very soul of our beloved former President, we wondered if there did not appear before the mind of this distinguished American a vision of the now sainted mother, whose fondest dreams, during her life, for her son were denied, were now, after her death, in a most remarkably strange manner being fulfilled! For the first time in the history of America, a former President, William Howard Taft, becomes the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

## JANET WOODROW — WILSON

WOODROW WILSON

*Twenty-eighth President of the United States,  
1913-1921*

**R**EV. THOMAS WOODROW, D.D., pastor of the Lowther Street Congregational Church, Carlisle, England, was the father of Janet Woodrow. He was not only a clergyman of note, but also an educator of ability. His last surviving pupil is Thomas Watson, of Carlisle, a house-painter. Janet was born in the parsonage home at Carlisle, and the villagers are very proud of the fact that one of their daughters became the mother of a President of the United States. In 1836, Dr. Woodrow came to America, bringing with him his wife and seven children. On the voyage, Janet came near losing her life. She was standing on the deck, clutching a rope, when a huge wave struck the vessel, bearing her bow in the water, and sweeping the little maid off the deck. But she was a good sailor, for she hung on to the rope, and escaped with a good wetting. But in this incident, we see how near America came to not having Woodrow Wilson as President. Dr. Woodrow went South, and occupied some of the prominent pulpits of the country. Meanwhile

## *Janet Woodrow — Wilson*

the little maid of the parsonage home had matured into a beautiful and accomplished Southern woman. She was wooed and won by Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, a Presbyterian clergyman, and she exchanged the parsonage home of her father for that of her husband. Dr. Wilson was well known as a Presbyterian minister in the South, but possibly more distinguished as a theological professor. For a number of years he was looked upon as one of the leaders of the denomination in the South.

Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia, December 28, 1856. The training of the parsonage home had not been lost on this son. It cannot be said that he inherited his strong religious convictions the more from his mother than from his father. It is not surprising that he chose the career of an educator; neither is it strange that this son of a model parsonage home should have been a pronounced Christian educator.

Life in that parsonage home was quite the ideal. It was not prosaic, dull, monotonous or Puritanical. There were rare good times. The religious life in that home was not a practised religion with the joyous smile squeezed out; it was a happy, cheerful religion. Among educated people of the South the custom obtained of having someone read aloud in the evening, after the day's work was done and the family had come together. Sometimes the father would read, sometimes the mother. So in the Wilson home there was the constant atmosphere of the

## *Our Presidents and Their Mothers*

university. When we combine trained minds with spirit-filled hearts we have a home bordering well nigh on the ideal. The presiding genius of that joyous home life was the mother. Her influence was contagious and abiding. She was the companion of her children, and the sharer of their joys and sorrows. Honorable Joseph R. Wilson, a brother of the President, in a letter to the writer, has given us a touch of the home life in the Wilson parsonage, and the affection Woodrow Wilson cherished in his heart for his mother.

BALTIMORE, MD., Feb., 1919.

REV. WILLIAM J. HAMPTON, D.D.,

Port Richmond, N. Y.

*Dear Sir:*

It would give me pleasure to furnish you the information you seek concerning my brother, the President, were I able to do so. He is ten years my senior. When, therefore, I reached the age of discernment, he was away most of the time at college, as a consequence we were not boys together at home. My earliest recollection of him as an elder brother is one of deepest affection. As an elder brother, he was always most considerate, generous, patient, tender, unselfish and kind. As a son the same characteristics prevailed, to which were added, respect, obedience and never-failing consideration, which he always showed his parents. All of these characteristics have been his throughout his entire life. He has always been a home lover. Our parents made companions and friends of their

*Janet Woodrow — Wilson*

children, thus holding us to them in the bonds of strongest love and mutual confidence.

Yours sincerely,

JOSEPH R. WILSON.

Woodrow Wilson is the finished product of the schools. In passing from Andrew Johnson to Woodrow Wilson, we study two absolute extremes. Johnson's mind was wholly untrained by the schools, never having attended a day in his life; Wilson's mind, on the other hand, trained by the masters of our great universities. He is an alumnus of Princeton and of Johns Hopkins University. He has served as a professor at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan University and Princeton, and when Princeton was seeking for a new president they selected one of their own professors, Woodrow Wilson, the first president in all her history not a clergyman. But his influence in a spiritual way was as great as though he had been a clergyman. Princeton students will never forget Woodrow Wilson, their president, leading the chapel services, robed in academic gown. He never refused to speak on the Christian life before the undergraduates. He once said, "The opinion of the Bible bred in me, not only by the teaching of my home when a boy, but also by every turn and experience of my life and every step of study, is that it is the one supreme source of the revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and the spiritual nature and needs of men. It

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is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation. If men could but be made to know it intimately, and for what it really is, we would have secured both individual and social regeneration." When president of Princeton, he frequently took a text and preached a sermon to the student body.

If scholastic training will fit a man to occupy the presidential chair, then no man has come to that high office better qualified. No state papers, emanating from any President, have ever had a more polished, graceful, rhetorical finish. As an educator, he was a star of the first magnitude in the scholastic world. He reflected credit, not only upon himself, but also upon the various institutions he served in the capacity of professor and university president. But would this man of academic training, "a son of clergymen and editors," make a good public official? There were many who said that this man, who had had no practical experience in politics, would be too theoretical. But everybody today knows he made one of the best governors New Jersey has ever had, and also one of our best Presidents.

Woodrow Wilson, although he made his *début* suddenly into the political arena, was no political prodigy. His many years of training have prepared him to handle with rare skill and in a practical way the problems of statesmanship. Mr. Wilson himself has said, "How did I happen to enter political



life? Why, I suppose I was born a political animal. Always from the first recollections of my youth up, I have aimed at political life. The reason why I studied law was, I suppose, because in the South, when I was a boy, the law furnished the shortest path to political life. I gave it up because I found I could not be an honest lawyer and politician,—at least, I didn't know how then to do it. . . . I took a new start, went back to school, where I tried to learn something about the facts of government. From the start my interest has been in things as they are, rather than in a theoretical knowledge of them. . . . I was always a practical politician." So instead of being a mere theorist in the political world, according to his own words he has always been a practical politician. This accounts for the astuteness and diplomacy with which he has handled some of the most delicate problems that it has ever been the lot of a President to solve. His fine mental discipline has stood him well in hand in these days of tremendous crises which have confronted him with ever-increasing frequency. When praised, he has not lost his head; when maligned, exhibiting at all times an unruffled spirit.

This heavily-burdened President, with a World War on his hands, with delicate diplomatic problems constantly to solve as commander-in-chief of our national forces in both army and navy, trying to untangle difficulties affecting questions of food, fuel and munitions, and with a hundred million people

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looking to him as their national leader,— this heavily-burdened man drops momentarily these burdens, draws aside the curtains of the past, and with the touch of an artist presents to us a lovely pen picture of the sainted mother who went to heaven years before national honors came to her distinguished son.

13 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

U.S.S. *Mayflower*,

The White House, Washington.

Rev. WILLIAM J. HAMPTON, D.D.,

*My dear Sir:*

I am sure that you will not have misunderstood my long delay in replying to your letter of the twenty-third of July last. It has been due to an extraordinary pressure of public business not only, but also to a feeling that I really did not know how to write an adequate answer. It is very hard for me to speak of what my mother was without colouring the whole estimate with the deep love that fills my heart whenever I think of her. But while others cannot have seen her as I did, I am sure that every one who knew her at all, must have felt also the charm of her unusual grace and refinement, and have been aware of the clear-eyed, perceiving mind that lay behind her frank, gray eyes. They were not always gray. They were of that strange, changeable colour, which so often goes with strong character and varied ability. She was one of the most remarkable persons I have ever known. She was so reserved, that only those of her own household can have known how lovable she was,

*Janet Woodrow — Wilson*

though every friend knew how loyal and steadfast she was. I seem to feel still the touch of her hand, and the sweet steadying influence of her wonderful character. I thank God to have had such a mother!

Very sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

President Wilson has been accused of having a nature rather cold, and the same was said of President Harrison; but who can truthfully say this after reading this beautiful tribute he has paid his mother? History will place this tribute alongside that of John Quincy Adams and James Buchanan, who paid such lovely tributes to their mothers.

On November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed, and the terrific World War was at an end. The world had never known such slaughter. Europe was drenched with blood. Never before had sacrifice been made on such gigantic scale. Not long after the signing of the armistice, President Wilson sailed for Europe, as chairman of the American delegation, to attend the Peace Conference. It was the first time in the history of America a President had gone to a foreign shore while holding office. Sunday, December 29, 1918, found President Wilson and his wife in Carlisle, England. Why was he here? This many-sided man, the man of letters, the diplomat, the statesman,—has left the circle of kings and nobles to visit the birthplace and the girlhood home of his mother. At the hour of worship he was in the pew of the Lowther Street

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Congregational Church, where his grandfather had served as pastor. In this church his mother's girlish voice had been heard as she joined in the singing of the hymns. What a scene! How clearly it brings into outline the domestic side of the President! The President of the greatest Republic on earth, welcomed as no crowned heads had ever been in the Courts of Europe, visiting the birthplace of his sainted mother and worshipping in the church of her girlhood days! The pastor, the Rev. Edward Booth, requested the President to speak. "We all want to hear your voice. Won't you say a few words to us?" The President hesitated a few moments, and then answered, "Yes, sir."

"The feelings excited in me today are really too intimate, and too deep to permit of public expression. The memories that have come of the mother, who was born here are very affecting. Her quiet character, her sense of duty, and her dislike of ostentation, have come back to me, with increasing force, as these years of duty have accumulated. Yet, perhaps, it is appropriate, that in a place of worship, I should acknowledge my indebtedness to her, and her remarkable father,—because after all, what the world now is seeking to do is to return to the paths of duty, to turn away from savagery of interests, to the dignity of the performance of right."

Was Woodrow Wilson ever greater than when he stood in that church and paid tribute to the mother who gave him birth? Thirty years had passed

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since his mother had gone home to heaven in 1888. His language spoken was eloquent, but no one will ever know what must have been the unspoken language of his soul, as memories of former days crowded in thick and fast,—and in the quiet seclusion of his soul, in his subconscious self, he is again at home — with his mother!

PHOEBE ELIZABETH DICKERSON —  
HARDING

WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING

*Twenty-ninth President of the United States, 1921—*

WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING is of English-Dutch descent. An ancestor, Stephen Harding, emigrated from England in 1624, and joined the Plymouth Colony at Weymouth, Massachusetts; later he resided at Braintree, in what was to be known as "The cradle of American Independence." In 1663, Jan Jansen ver Kersen, or Van Kirk, as it became known in America, came from Holland and settled in King's County, Long Island. He became the ancestor of Warren G. Harding on his mother's side. Mr. Harding, with an ancestry in this country dating back three centuries, can lay just claim to the purest of American blood. Sixteen of our Presidents have had a military record of their own, and nearly all the others have had an ancestry where there has been the willing response to shoulder the gun and fight our nation's battles when her honor was imperilled. The blood of the soldier flows through the veins of President Harding. His sister, Miss Abi-



*Phœbe Elizabeth Dickerson — Harding*

gail V. Harding, writes that Josiah Van Kirk, the great-grandfather of Mr. Harding's mother, "gave seven sons to the armies in the struggle for Independence," a record probably unparalleled by any colonist of his day. The same patriotism was manifest on the paternal side. The Hardings were genuine patriots. During the Revolution the Harding ancestors were fighters, as well as the Van Kirks, the ancestors of Mr. Harding's mother. If the facts were known, they may have shed their blood on the same battle-field. "Of the Harding direct line we can readily follow them from generation to generation, from blacksmith to farmer, to sea-captain, from warrior to lawyer, to doctor and senator," and finally President of the United States. They made willing sacrifices which were required in the early development of this country. Many were the stirring events that linked the names of the Hardings with the struggle for freedom and liberty. The same is true of the Van Kirks on the maternal side. Blest with such an ancestry, we marvel not that in Warren G. Harding we have the patriot and statesman.

Isaac Dickerson and Charity Van Kirk were the parents of Phœbe Elizabeth Dickerson. She was the youngest child in a family of nine, eight girls and one boy. Phoebe was born December the twenty-first, 1843, near Corsica, Ohio, at that time called Blooming Grove. In the same town lived a young man named George Tryon Harding, one year

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the senior of Miss Dickerson. The Civil War was being fought in bloody battle. Young Harding led his bride, a girl of twenty, to the marriage altar on Saturday, May the seventh, 1864, and the following Monday, May the ninth, he shouldered his rifle, bade his bride of a day good-bye, and left for the front. Who can picture the parting of that young couple! The husband of a day tearing himself away from his young wife, to suffer he knew not what, and possibly never to return! We can picture the young bride following him with her eyes as long as she could until his form was lost to view! He had gone! Had she seen him for the last time? What anxious weeks and months followed! But the young soldier-husband's life was spared. He took up the study of medicine and became a practicing physician. Phoebe Elizabeth Harding became the mother of eight children. On November the second, 1865, a little blue-eyed baby boy was born in the farmhouse of his grandparents. The baby was named Warren Gamaliel, after an uncle, Rev. Warren Gamaliel Bancroft, a Methodist clergyman. The other children were Charity Malvina, May Clarissa, Priscilla Elmira, Charles, Abigail Victoria, George Tryon, Jr., and Phoebe Carolyn.

Dr. Harding combined his practice of medicine with farming. Warren spent his boyhood days on his father's farm and received his early schooling in the public school adjacent. Early in life he learned

*Phæbe Elizabeth Dickerson — Harding*

the value of money, earning what he could by doing odd jobs, for his father had a large family to support. Graduating from the high school at Caledonia, he entered Central Ohio College at Iberia, and graduated in three years. While in college he worked at odd jobs in order to help himself through school. After graduating he passed an examination to teach school. It was some time before he found himself. It looked for a time as though he might be a misfit, a "square peg in a round hole." He studied law, but gave that up. He then tried insurance, but that was not to his liking. He next took up the newspaper business, serving in all the various stages, from printer's devil to editor and publisher of *The Marion Star*. Mr. Harding never forgot his own struggles in early life. He knew what it was to begin at the bottom of the ladder, and what it was to work for wages. His sympathy has always been with the toiler. During his entire business career he has never had a strike among his employees, and throughout his legislative career, state and national, he has shown a friendly interest for the toiler.

President Harding's active political career covers a period of about twenty years. Thirteen years ago, in *The Marion Star*, he stated, that of the men Ohio had furnished for the presidency, practically all, prior to their nomination, had not had a national reputation; they had been only the favorite sons of their state. He did not then realize how that statement from his pen was to apply to himself in the not-

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distant future. In 1900, when he was thirty-five, he was elected to serve his state as senator; this he did with distinction for two terms. He was a fluent speaker, and readily won for himself a hearing by his oratory. When he came to Columbus he was an unknown quantity, politically speaking, but he soon became the most popular man in the Legislature. He had a commanding presence, over six feet in height, well proportioned, and strikingly handsome; he had pleasing manners, an amiable disposition, and was easy of approach. He has been called the Great Harmonizer. He never forgot a man's face, or his name,—a fine asset to a politician. There was warmth in his handshake, and his smile was contagious,—and all was so genuine. No one believed it was put on for effect, for it was never put off. In 1904–1905, he served his state as lieutenant-governor. In 1914, he was nominated for United States Senator by the Republicans, elected, and entered upon his duties December the sixth, 1915. In 1916, when the Republican National Convention was held in Chicago, he was chosen permanent chairman. The Convention had nominated Charles Evans Hughes for President. As soon as Senator Harding had declared the Convention adjourned *sine die*, and had laid down the gavel, several friends gathered about him and declared: “You will be nominated here four years hence,” a prophecy fulfilled. In 1920 he was nominated, on the birthday of his father, Dr. Hard-

*Phæbe Elizabeth Dickerson — Harding*

ing, who on that day was seventy-six years old,—and on his own birthday, November the second, elected President of the United States by the largest majority ever given any candidate. His career lies before him. He has never failed his constituents in any office of trust to which he has been elected,—neither will he fail now.

Warren G. Harding furnishes another example of a son's devotion to his mother. Her influence over him was abiding. Down to the day of her death, she was the object of his loving regard and affection. She died May the twenty-ninth, 1910, at Marion, Ohio. She lived long enough to see her son wear worthily high political honors bestowed upon him by his native state, but died ten years before he was elected to the presidency. She had such implicit faith in him, and believed so thoroughly in his ability, that nothing was more certain to her than that some day he would be chosen President of the United States. President Harding's sister, Miss Abigail Victoria Harding, a teacher in the public schools of Marion, has written the author of these lines much of the historical data chronicled herein, stamping them accordingly with correctness. In her own words she will also tell us the story of her brother's reverence for and devotion to his mother:



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428 EAST CENTRE STREET, MARION, OHIO,  
January 24, 1921.

Rev. WILLIAM J. HAMPTON,  
213 Heberton Avenue,  
Port Richmond, N. Y.

*My dear Mr. Hampton:*

I wish I were in a position to give you the incidents of my brother's boyhood life, but the difference in our ages makes it impossible for me to give you of much interest. However I can never forget the love and devotion for his mother up to the time of her death, his regular visits with an offering of flowers, his implicit confidence in her and his admiration of her fine Christian character. He says that the best proof he knows of the truth of the Christian religion is found in his mother's life. She was a rare and wonderful mother, one to whom her children could always go in confidence, assured of her deep love, sympathy and understanding.

She was very independent, with a deeply spiritual and religious nature, possessing that wonderful courage of conviction that only martyrs can claim. Perhaps her greatest ambition was to be of service to her fellowmen and to have her children do likewise.

. . . . .  
Sincerely yours,

ABIGAIL V. HARDING.

Here we find as in the case of so many mothers of our Presidents, a mother who was the companion of her children. She had won their confidence, and by her Christian life had given her home an ideal



*Phæbe Elizabeth Dickerson — Harding*

Christian atmosphere. Do we wonder that in after years her distinguished son paid her this beautiful tribute: "The best proof he had of the truth of the Christian religion was found in his mother's life." Again, the truth, with intense burning conviction, is forced home to our minds, that great men have had good mothers!

When Warren G. Harding went out into the world, and the cares and burdens of life increased, he never permitted himself to forget the mother who gave him birth. She was passionately fond of flowers, and every Sunday morning, according to his friend, Richard Crissinger, a fellow-townsmen, and also according to his sister, Miss Abigail, this "gray-haired, busy-eyed man" would take flowers and lay them in his mother's lap. This custom he observed whether at home or abroad. Flowers were provided for his mother every Sunday. After she had passed away, flowers were always found in Mr. Harding's room every Sunday morning as a reminder of his sainted mother. Thus every week of the year he observed "Mother's Day."

Mr. Harding has had every advantage which the Christian home affords. His father, Dr. Harding, was a Baptist, and his mother a Methodist. The Harding home was the rendezvous for preachers of all denominations, and his parents were considered leaders in church circles. The first religious instruction the children received, came from Mother Harding. Warren, we are told, was a willing pupil,

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sitting at her knee as a child and listening eagerly while she related beautiful Bible stories. Before he could read she had him commit to memory many great Bible texts, and she also had taught him many of the Book's great cardinal truths. When young Warren was fourteen, he attended revival services in the Methodist Church at Caledonia, conducted by the pastor, Rev. G. L. Hahnawalt. He was converted, baptized and received into the membership of that church. When the Harding family moved to Marion, Warren joined the Baptist Church, and has continued to be a member of the Trinity Baptist Church ever since.

Several of the mothers of our Presidents have desired that their sons should become ministers, and in that list is included the mother of Warren G. Harding. When Warren was converted at such an early age, his mother felt her hopes were to be realized. She had consecrated to Christian service the eldest born, Warren G., and the youngest, Mrs. Votaw. "These two children," she said, "are consecrated to the service of God and humanity." Warren did not become a minister, but he has never ceased to take an active interest in the work of the church. His sister, Mrs. Votaw, served ten years as a missionary in India and established missions and dispensaries in Burmah. Surely this Christian mother's prayer of consecration has been answered!

Mr. Harding has attended regularly the services in the Baptist Church at Marion, and is one of the

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trustees. The church has been described as "a little church," with a membership made up largely of "common people," the kind Abraham Lincoln loved, and the kind Warren G. Harding moves among in a neighborly, kindly, friendly manner. He is, indeed, their friend. In these relations there is no trace of a patronizing or superior air. To this little flock of worshippers, President Harding will always be Warren Harding of *The Marion Star*. He was their friend then, he is the kind of man that will be their friend always,—and they will always be his friends.

President Harding was responsible for securing the present pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, of which he is a member. When serving in the Senate of the United States, he was invited to deliver a lecture in the Methodist Church at Portsmouth, Ohio. He remained over night at the home of a friend and the next morning, which was Sunday, he addressed the Sunday School, after which he quietly slipped out, and went to a neighboring Baptist Church, where the Rev. T. H. McAfee was pastor. The subject of Dr. McAfee's sermon was "When a Man meets His Own Judgment in Life." Senator Harding was favorably impressed, and at the close of the service he introduced himself to the pastor, asking him how he would like to come to Marion and become the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. "The pulpit is vacant," said the Senator, "and I know our people would be glad to have you serve

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them." Not many months elapsed before Dr. McAfee was installed as Trinity's pastor. The two men have been firm friends ever since. Dr. McAfee found a wise counsellor in Senator Harding, one who has cordially sustained him by his presence and his purse. Some time after Senator Harding had been nominated for the presidency, Dr. McAfee suffered a stroke of paralysis. He was compelled to give up his pulpit temporarily. Once every week, if the Senator was in town, he called to see his afflicted pastor, taking with him flowers and fruit, and sometimes a friend. He did this throughout the campaign, when his time, as his campaign managers declared, was "entirely mortgaged." Dr. McAfee was induced to go away for a year for rest and recuperation, while Senator Harding arranged to pay for the pulpit supply during his absence.

While the presidential campaign was on, an obscure clergyman, the editor of an obscure church paper, came to the Senator and asked him to answer the following questions:

1. What is the value and place of religion in giving meaning and worth to life?
2. What is the usefulness of the Christian church in the stabilizing of social conditions at the present time of great unrest?
3. What is the value of the Sunday school in the religious training of youth?
4. What is your own church relation and those of your family?

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5. What has the Sunday school added to your life?
6. What is your regard for the Bible?

Those who were running the political campaign took the attitude of certain of Christ's disciples, when the people pressed him in the days of his popularity. "Send them away," they cried; but the Master said, "Let them come." So the politicians protested and declared that Senator Harding could not spare the time to answer the questions, for "every single moment of his days and nights is mortgaged." But the Senator replied, "We will take time somehow; these are matters of fundamental importance; we must give attention to them, though something else is crowded out." One week prior to his election he pledged himself officially in favor of enforcing the Prohibition Act, "as a churchman and believer in the Master." After news of his election had been conveyed to him, he gave expression first of all to a prayer for guidance. It was not the time for exultation but for prayer.

"It is all so serious, the obligations are so solemn that instead of exulting I am more given to prayer to God to make me capable of playing my part, and that all these calls to responsibility may meet the aspirations and expectations of America and the world."

About one month after his election to the presidency, a convention of Presbyterian laymen was held in Marion. The President-elect was intro-



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duced and spoke briefly. The short address, as published in *The Marion Star*, clearly reveals the religious character of President Harding:

"I want you to believe that there is an individual who believes in the reconsecration of a religious Republic.

"I have for my inheritance a Christian belief, and I have in my veins the blood of Christian parentage. I have been preaching to my fellow-countrymen the gospel of reverence. I do not believe we can have the highest type of civilization without its religious strain. We need its influence and we need its discipline.

"Sometimes I think the world is adrift from its moorings of religion, and I know it will help if there comes a great renewal of faith. I am trying to bring into practice in America the government which emanates from the meeting of minds. I do not think of any higher concept in the world than just government, and I do not see how a government can exist in the world without coming in contact with God.

"I could not hope for a happy relationship among nations if there is not the same current of recognition of the Supreme Being. America will take her place in making a world peace and answer every American aspiration without the surrender of one thing we hold dear as Americans. When it comes to an association of nations, I do not think that any association can be successful in which God is not recognized.

"I do not intend to come as the finest example of what a man ought to be, but I rejoice in the inheri-



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tance of a religious belief, and I do not mind saying that I gladly go to God Almighty for guidance and strength in the responsibilities that are coming to me."

Prior to his taking the oath of office as President of the United States, he had selected the text on which he proposed to lay his hand; it reads: "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Phoebe Elizabeth Harding did her work well. In all this we see the influence of a Christian mother's life and training. The fine accomplishments and statesmanship of this distinguished son will add new glory to the rare graces of Christian motherhood. President McKinley, one time in the presence of several distinguished persons, significantly tapping the desk in front of him, said: "No person will ever sit in this chair as President of the United States who denies the existence of Almighty God." What did he mean? Evidently this: that God would never permit such a person to become President of the United States who denied His existence, and the people of this great nation would effectually block the elevation to this exalted position of such a person. What agency has God used mostly to accomplish this purpose? Our answer,—CHRISTIAN MOTHERS!

The study of "Our Presidents and Their Mothers"

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has led us to see the tremendous influence mothers have had in preparing sons for the presidential chair. These mothers were women of high character, richly endowed intellectually, and, at least in most instances, very devout Christians. We are not sure whether any mother was a college graduate; it is safe to say none were, with the possibility of recent rare exceptions. Educational advantages for young women were practically unknown in the early history of our country. Even the Puritans of New England for a century and a half did not permit girls to attend school except at such seasons of the year when the schoolroom would not be needed by the boys. Today, what changes! Schools, colleges, and universities are all open for women to enjoy the advantages of a liberal education on the same basis as the men. Seventy-five years ago, about the only avenues of employment open to young women were dressmaking and school-teaching; today, women are welcomed in all the trades, and in practically all the professions. The right to vote at all elections has been granted her by Constitutional Amendment. If the mothers mentioned in this book had lived in this day, styled by some, the day of the "New Woman," would so many noble women have been passed by in silence? We cannot believe it could be true. The woman of tomorrow, historically, will have her place alongside that of man. Her voice will be heard, not simply in the domestic circle, but in the affairs of state, in great

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world reforms, in the world of politics, and she has already made her appearance in legislative assemblies. In these new spheres of activity she will not shine with a reflected glory, but with a glory all her own.

It is honor almost sufficient to be the mother of a son who became President of the United States. Such a mother might be willing to shine even with a reflected glory. We are told, that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." That will not be less true because of changing conditions as affecting woman, but, if possible, more true. How true it seems when we apply it to those who cradled and trained those who became the Rulers of America! It has been a noble line of mothers, from Mary Ball, mother of George Washington, to Phoebe Elizabeth Dickerson, mother of Warren G. Harding. The tasks of these noble mothers have been completed. All have been called to the homeland above. Napoleon once said, "What France needs is mothers." Mothers, however, have been the pride of our fair land, and none more worthy the praise of men than the MOTHERS OF OUR PRESIDENTS!











